

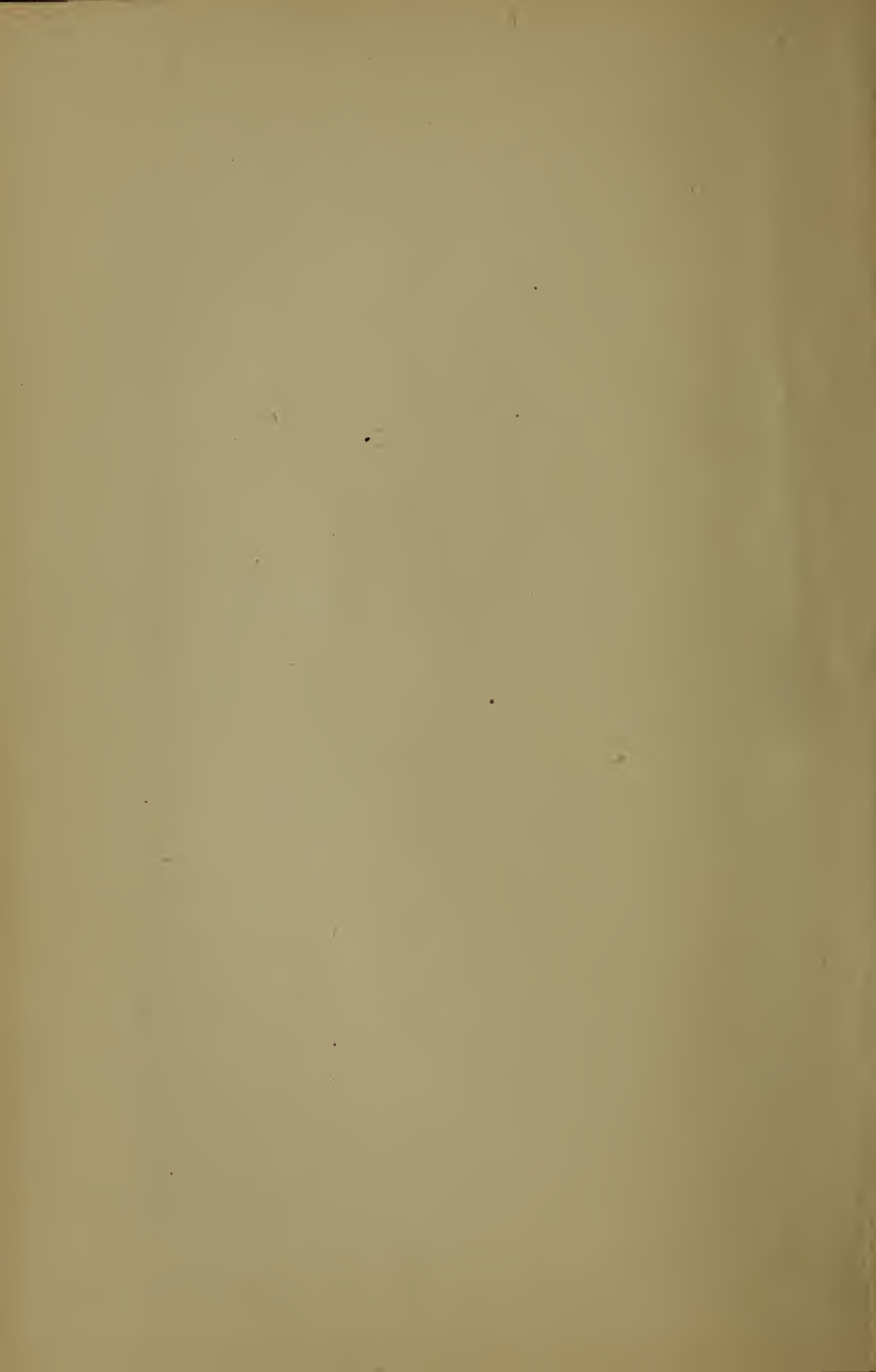


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Catholic Belief and Practice

By

Rev. James E. McGavick

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Revised and Enlarged.

1910

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Preface to Fourth Edition.

The favorable reception accorded "*Catholic Belief and Practice*" is most gratifying. The sales have grown to such an extent as to render it advisable to revise and enlarge it with a view of increasing its usefulness. Three editions have already been exhausted, and a fourth edition, carefully revised and enlarged, will now be published by the M. H. Wiltzius Company of Milwaukee and New York.

During the short time that this small volume has been before the public, the author has received numerous commendations from the Clergy in all parts of the country. Their words of praise have been an incentive to him to make the book still more useful to Catholics by affording them a ready means of instruction in their various religious duties, and to non-Catholics, by supplying them with a short and concise explanation of the customs and practices of the Catholic Church.

We sincerely hope that this new edition will merit even more than heretofore the confidence and good will of the Catholic public.

J. E. M.,

HOLY ANGELS CHURCH,
Chicago.

April, 1910.

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Catholic Belief and Practice.

WHAT CATHOLICS MUST BELIEVE.

As Catholics we must believe in one only God, Creator of heaven and earth and all things, who is all just, holy and merciful,—infinite in all perfections; and that in God there are three divine Persons, really distinct and equal, namely, Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

We must believe that God created angels to adore Him in heaven, but some of them rebelled and were cast into hell. God also created Adam and Eve from whom the human family has descended. He placed them in an earthly paradise, but expelled them on account of their eating the forbidden fruit. By this transgression of our first parents, sin came into the world, and we are all conceived in it and born with it upon our soul. We could never free ourselves from this sin had not God showed His mercy by sending us a Savior.

We must believe that this Savior is our Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, who assumed human flesh to redeem us. He is true God, because He is the Son of God, and true man because He is the Son of a human mother, and has a body and soul like ours.

We must believe that our Lord Jesus Christ was conceived in the womb of the Virgin Mary, His Mother,

in a miraculous manner by the power of the Holy Ghost; that God preserved her free from original sin from the first moment of her conception; that our Lord Jesus Christ was born of her, she remaining a virgin; that He offered Himself up to His Father as a sacrifice for the sins of the world; and that there is no mercy, no grace, no salvation except through Him.

We are bound to believe that Jesus Christ died upon the cross, and arose from the dead on the third day, and stayed on earth forty days after, showing Himself to, and conversing with, His disciples, and then in sight of them ascended into heaven. Thence He sent the Holy Ghost upon them and His Church.

We must believe that Christ established a Church and only one Church for the whole world and all people; and that she is the Catholic Church; that Christ is her invisible Head and the Holy Ghost her guide; that she has a visible head on earth, the Pope, who holds his office by virtue of his being the successor of St. Peter, whom Christ made chief of the Apostles and His vicar on earth; that this Church is infallible, and shall exist to the end of the world, and has the authority to rule and govern the faithful.

We must believe that a Revelation was made by God to man, or that God spoke words to man; that this Revelation is contained in the Sacred Scriptures and in Tradition; that these Scriptures and the truths contained in Tradition were committed to the Church and that she is the guardian and interpreter of them; and that the Scriptures and Tradition as interpreted by the Church are our rule of faith and practice.

We must believe that when the Pope speaks "ex cathedra," in defining a doctrine of faith or morals to the whole Church he is infallible.

We must believe that our Lord Jesus Christ instituted seven Sacraments as means of salvation, namely, Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Eucharist, Penance, Extreme Unction, Holy Orders and Matrimony; and that they confer interior grace.

Also that our Lord instituted one great Sacrifice of His Body and Blood, to be offered up till the end of the world. It is called the Mass.

We must believe that the Blessed Sacrament of the Eucharist contains truly, really and substantially the Body and the Blood with the soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We must believe in a Communion of Saints, that is, a "fellowship" between the members of the Church on earth, the saints in Heaven and the souls in Purgatory. We can help one another by our prayers and deeds of charity; we can pray for the souls in Purgatory and thus help them, and to the saints in Heaven, and they can pray for us and thus help us. We should believe, also, that the saints in Heaven should be honored and venerated, and that this veneration is good and useful.

We must believe that the soul is immortal; that there is a Hereafter, that is, a Heaven, a Hell, a Purgatory, where man shall be rewarded or punished after death according to his works.

We must believe that God will judge us immediately after death; that this world shall be destroyed, and on that last day Christ shall come as Judge; that then

every soul shall be re-united to its body and shall appear before Him to be judged; and that He shall render to every one according to his works; and by the sentence which He shall pronounce must all abide throughout eternity.

There are other doctrines which a Catholic must believe, but they are really contained in the above; as, for instance, the definitions of the Church assembled in her General Councils which follow from her infallible teaching authority.

WHAT CATHOLICS MUST DO.

Faith alone will not conduct the soul to everlasting life. In addition to faith it must have good works to its credit. Our Lord says it will be rendered to everyone according to his works. It is again written, that faith without good works is null and void. Reason and the best interests of humanity are in accord with these words.

What are the works we must do, or avoid doing, to be pleasing to God? They can be stated under a few main headings:

1. We must keep the Ten Commandments of God.
2. We must obey the chief precepts of the Church.
3. We must avoid the seven capital sins and possess in a degree their corresponding virtues.
4. We must perform the special duties and fulfill the obligations which arise from our state of life.
5. We must receive the Sacraments when our condition or state of life requires or permits their reception.

6. If we grievously offend against the law of God, or in other words, sin mortally, we must sincerely repent and seek forgiveness through the Sacrament of Penance.

The Ten Commandments are first and foremost. It is absolutely necessary to keep them. They are the moral code of Christians. They practically cover the whole field of moral action. They contain so much that many forget their essential requirements. We should be well acquainted with not merely their lettering, but their spirit.

We should know not only what they command and prohibit, but what they reasonably imply. Taken in their whole bearing they are so extensive that we cannot enter into details here. The little Catechism, however, could be read over and over again with great profit by young and old. We should not forget that the first precept of the Decalogue, besides the duties imposed on us by the three virtues of faith, hope and charity, contains the divine precept of our Lord on prayer. We should pray every day to obtain the grace of doing good and avoiding sin.

Besides the Ten Commandments, the Church has framed certain laws or made binding certain precepts which must be obeyed. The chief of these are six, namely: to go to Mass every Sunday and holy day of obligation; to fast and abstain on days appointed; to go to confession once a year; to go to holy Communion during the Easter time of each year; to contribute our share towards the support of the Church (binding in

charity); and to comply with the laws of God and of the Church in reference to marriage, particularly against divorce.

If we wish to avoid an evil, we must get at the root of it. It must be dug up and destroyed. The roots of all evil are these seven sins: pride, covetousness, anger, lust, envy, gluttony and sloth. These are called the seven capital sins, and we must not only avoid them, but we must possess at least in a degree their corresponding virtues; that is, humility in the place of pride; charity or liberality in the place of covetousness and greed; meekness in the place of anger; purity and chastity in the place of lust, which is impurity and unchastity; brotherly love and good will in the place of envy; temperance in eating and drinking in the place of gluttony, which is intemperance in all its forms; and reasonable diligence in daily work and activity in serving God in the place of sloth, which is idleness and carelessness in living up to the teachings of religion. Let us not forget that Leo XIII has declared socialism to be opposed to the virtue of justice.

All have special duties and obligations which arise from their state of life. For instance, parents have duties to their children, and children to their parents; employers have duties to those whom they employ, and employes to their employers; doctors to their patients; lawyers to their clients; priests to their people, etc. Every state of life has numerous special duties and obligations which must be faithfully fulfilled. Leo XIII advises young people in order to avoid the dangers of condemned societies (see article "Societies Condemned

by the Church”), to resolve never to join any society without the previous advice of their parents and their pastor.

As God is infinitely good, there is pardon for each and every offense, no matter how great, provided we are sorry, and propose not to offend again, and seek reconciliation to the divine goodness through the means which our Lord instituted for the forgiveness of sins and the increase of sanctifying grace. These means are the Sacraments through which sins are forgiven and grace unto everlasting life is imparted to the soul.

THE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD.

The Commandments given by God to Moses on Mount Sinai and confirmed by our Lord, are as follows:

1. I am the Lord thy God, * * * thou shalt not have strange gods before Me.

(The full wording of this command is: I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt not have strange gods before Me. Thou shalt not make to thyself a graven thing, nor the likeness of any thing that is in heaven above or in the earth beneath, nor of those things that are in the waters under the earth. Thou shalt not adore them nor serve them.)

2. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.

3. Remember thou keep holy the Sabbath Day.

4. Honor thy father and thy mother.

5. Thou shalt not kill.

6. Thou shalt not commit adultery.

7. Thou shalt not steal.

8. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

9. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife.

10. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods.

The above commands are divine laws imposed by God upon the human race. They were approved and confirmed by our Lord, and are, therefore, the moral code of Christians. They are so extensive either in their expressed or implied meaning that they practically cover the whole field of moral action. They either express or imply all our duties and obligations towards God and our fellow men.

They must be kept in their entirety. No one is excused from their observance. No man, no class, no body of men can set them aside, or make exceptions to them, or treat them with impunity. It was not without significance that they were given to men engraven on tablets of stone to signify that they must be ineffacably stamped upon their minds and in their hearts. They must be lived up to.

No other set of laws has ever done the human race so much good, and no other set of laws can ever take their place. They bear the impress of the Almighty, and make known to the world His holy will in all that is best, purest, holiest and most elevating in human conduct. The Voice of Sinai has turned men heavenward, and they will cease to walk in that direction when they cease to listen to that Voice. They will then turn away from God.

Taken in their whole bearing, these commands contain so much that their details would fill volumes, and on this account we are apt to forget some of their essential parts. We cannot here enter into these details, but Catholics ought to occasionally read over some short treatise in reference to them, or at least the little Catechism, so as to be acquainted with their main requirements.

The motives impelling us to observe them will be found in truest love towards God and our fellow men. For this reason our Lord condensed them into two, namely, love for God and love for one another. He said: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. And the second is like to this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments dependeth the whole law and the prophets." As may be seen, the three first commandments primarily refer to God, the other seven to our neighbor. All men are our neighbors. Hence he who sincerely loves God and his neighbor keeps the whole law.

THE CHURCH.

The Church unerringly tells us what we must believe and do for our salvation. Through her and the Sacraments we partake of the fruits of Christ's Redemption.

The Church is the congregation of those who are baptized, profess the faith of Christ, partake of the

same Sacraments and are ruled by their lawful pastors under one visible head. In other words, the Church is, to quote the Roman Catechism, the Christian commonwealth, or the faithful dispersed throughout the world.

The visible head of the Church is the Pope, who is the Bishop of Rome, the Vicar of Christ and the successor of St. Peter. Our Lord in Heaven is her invisible head.

The Church has three parts, namely, the Church triumphant or those of her members who are enjoying everlasting happiness in Heaven, the Church suffering, or those who are in Purgatory, and the Church militant or those who are on earth "fighting" for the salvation of their souls. The fellowship existing between these parts is called the "Communion of Saints."

The Church has marks by which she may be known. A mark is that by which one object may be distinguished from another. The marks of the Church are four, namely, unity, holiness, catholicity and apostolicity. She is one because all her members profess the same faith, partake of the same Sacraments and are under one head. The unity of the Church is not destroyed by the withdrawal or expulsion of members who fall away and profess a different belief, but to acknowledge them to be good members and allow them to remain within her would destroy her unity. She is holy because her founder, Jesus Christ, is holy, because she teaches a holy doctrine and because of the great holiness of so many of her children. She does not teach a single doctrine that is unholy or leads to unholiness. All her members would become saintly, if they would

only obey her. Those who are not holy do not obey her or do not practice what she teaches.

The Church is Catholic, because she is universal as to time, place and truth, or she subsists in all ages, teaches all nations and maintains all truth. A national church is not universal, hence not Catholic. It is true that the Catholic Church is called Roman, but this appellation is not given her because she is intended solely for Rome, but to designate that the chief seat of her authority is in Rome. She is finally Apostolic, because she was founded on the Apostles and teaches what they taught and is governed by their successors. No church can claim to be Apostolic that was founded centuries after the Apostles.

Besides the above marks, the Church has three attributes, namely, authority, infallibility and indefectibility. By her authority is meant the right and power to teach and govern the faithful. By her infallibility is meant her inerrancy in defining or teaching doctrines of faith and morals. She speaks infallibly in her general Councils or through the Pope when he speaks "ex cathedra" or defines a doctrine of faith or morals to the whole Church. By her indefectibility is meant that she will last to the end of time.

No church has these marks and attributes but the Catholic Church. A church in which any one of them is wanting is not the Church which Christ founded.

Must all belong to the Church? All are bound to belong to her, for Christ established His Church for all men, and he who knows and believes her to be that Church which Christ established and will not join her,

cannot save his soul. If he is in doubt he must make a reasonable effort to clear away such doubts. He must inquire, and above all things pray earnestly for light and guidance.

Why do I belong to the Catholic Church? Because I know and believe that Christ established a Church for the whole world and for all men. I and everyone should, therefore, belong to that Church. I know and believe that the Catholic Church is that Church or is the Church of Christ. Hence I belong to her.

THE CHIEF PRECEPTS OF THE CHURCH.

The chief precepts of the Church are as follows:

1. To attend Mass every Sunday and holy day of obligation.
2. To fast and abstain on days appointed.
3. To go to confession once a year.
4. To go to Communion once a year. During the Easter time.
5. To contribute to the support of our pastors.
6. Not to marry persons who are not Catholics, nor related within the fourth degree of kindred, nor privately without witnesses, nor to solemnize marriage at forbidden times.

There can be no doubt ~~that~~ the Church has the

power to enact such laws, and make them binding in conscience. For details pertaining to the above precepts, the reader is referred to special articles on fasting and abstaining, the Sunday, Easter duty, holy days of obligation, the Church and the Clergy, and marriage.

MORNING AND EVENING PRAYERS.

Catholics are accustomed to pray every morning and evening. That is what is meant by their "morning and evening prayers." Early in the beginning of the day, we ask God to direct our actions and bless our labors; and late in the evening, just before retiring, we beg Him to be with us and protect us during the darkness of the night.

There is no set form of morning or evening prayers, but Catholics usually say the Our Father, the Hail Mary, the Apostles' Creed, the Confiteor, the acts of faith, hope, charity and contrition. The Our Father is the sublimest prayer ever uttered on earth. It was composed by our Lord Himself, and hence it is called the Lord's prayer. The Hail Mary is a salutation to the Virgin Mary. It contains the very words with which the angel Gabriel saluted her and announced to her that she was to become the Mother of God. The Apostles' Creed is a short epitome of the chief articles of Catholic belief. Other prayers or one of the Litanies, particularly the Litany of the Blessed Virgin, may be added. The Rosary may also be recited. While it is always best to say the above prayers, we can pray in our own words according to our tastes and needs. It is an

excellent thing to ask God to assist us in our undertakings, to bless our friends, to forgive our enemies, to enlighten those who are over us, and to be merciful to the souls in Purgatory.

All our good actions are deserving of merit and we can apply our merits to others or any good cause, provided we have the intention of doing so. Besides there are indulgences attached to many good actions, but we must have the intention of gaining them, at least a general or implied intention. It is well to form such an intention and assign our merits for special purposes when we say our morning prayers. We can say: "I desire to gain all indulgences today," or, "I offer up all my actions today for ——." These words, or even the thought of them, would be sufficient.

All good Catholics are particular about their morning and evening prayers. They say them as regularly as the day comes and goes. So should it be with you; never miss them, except for the gravest reasons. The time spent is insignificant and the benefits accruing are exceedingly great. You will then begin the day by praising and invoking the holy name of God, and you will end it with the same sweet name upon your lips and in your heart.

ARE PRAYERS HEARD AND ANSWERED?

God is certainly ever ready to listen to our prayers, and will answer them if we pray aright, and He sees it will be for our good. The Scriptures are full of passages which assert in the most forcible words that "high

as are the heavens and low as is the earth, God hears the voice of men." Our Lord was most emphatic on this point, especially prayers presented to the Father in His name.

It is, however, true that prayers are sometimes unheard and unanswered. God will not grant us in answer to prayers things that may be injurious to our spiritual welfare. He will not answer prayers that are not said with faith, confidence, earnestness and perseverance. It is not likely that He will grant things that are useless or unnecessary or harmful. But our religion teaches that when we pray aright, God, if He does not give the identical favor we ask, bestows greater blessings and more valuable gifts in forms and disguises that may escape our attention. We know little about the eternal influence of events or things. We know nothing about the blessings we will secure or the misfortunes we will escape in the future. We are safer in God's hands. To devout souls God grants more than they ask, anticipating even the desires of the heart.

In this connection we should never forget the words of St. Augustine. He says: "God denies some things in His love, which He grants in His wrath." We should remember the truth expressed by these words. Because God is not pleased with some people He may grant them the objects of their heart's desire, namely, wealth, position, prosperity and worldly success—things that our Lord looked upon with disfavor. He condemned them, not because they are evil in themselves, but because they are liable to taint the mind and corrupt the heart and draw both mind and heart away from Him. They are

good only in the possession of the good; they are curses in the possession of the bad. Hence God may, though it cannot be said that He does in any particular instance, give them in His anger. But He always gives to His friends only such things as His love prompts Him to give. We surely want nothing from God in His anger, no matter how good or fair or beautiful it may appear; we want only such things as come from His infinite love, no matter how distasteful they may be or how hard they may be to bear.

THE SACRAMENTS.

A sacrament is a visible sign of an invisible grace, instituted by Jesus Christ for our sanctification. In other words, our Lord specified that certain outward actions be performed, and if they are performed properly and with right dispositions He has promised to impart to the soul certain graces. These actions, or signs coming under the domain of the senses, are seven in number, and are called Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Eucharist, Penance, Extreme Unction, Holy Orders and Matrimony. The first and fourth, that is, Baptism and Penance, impart a grace remissive of sin. They cannot be received unless there is sin to be forgiven. They are called Sacraments of the dead, because they give that which is the life of the soul, namely, sanctifying grace. The soul that is not in a state of sanctifying grace is dead before God, not in the sense that its immortality is destroyed, but in the sense that God's abiding friendship has been forfeited. The other Sacraments increase

this sanctifying grace. They are called Sacraments of the living, because the one who receives them worthily is living the life of grace. He already possesses sanctifying grace, and their reception increases it. Moreover, each of the Sacraments gives a sacramental grace, which is a divine help towards the accomplishment of the purpose or the attainment of the end for which the Sacrament was instituted. Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Orders can be received only once, because they imprint a spiritual character on the soul which can never be effaced. The others can be received more than once.

They are wonderful means for the acquisition of sanctity. They are instruments of God's choicest blessings. Through them moral transgression is forgiven, virtue nourished, spiritual strength supplied, and human nature fortified. They are divine institutions, and no one can afford to disbelieve in their efficacy, nor neglect their use, nor regard them with disfavor.

Referring to their number, the Catechism of the Council of Trent says that there is probably an analogy between the relation they bear to the soul and the relation certain laws of nature bear to the body. The similarity of the workings between the two is very striking. For instance, certain things are absolutely necessary for the existence of our body or our natural parts, namely, birth, growth, nourishment, healing, strength, government and continuation of society.

It is very striking that the Sacraments supply the needs of similar necessities of the soul, signifying that there may be an analogy or likeness between the wants of the two. Thus, Baptism is the Sacrament of re-birth

or birth unto everlasting life. "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God." Confirmation is the Sacrament of growth. Through the operations of the Holy Ghost and His divine gifts, the soul grows into holiness and sanctity. The Eucharist is that Sacrament in which the soul is nourished with the body and blood of Christ. Penance is the Sacrament of healing. The soul is thereby cured when afflicted with the deadly disease of sin. Holy Orders are the Sacrament of government, and Matrimony the Sacrament of the continuation of society unto future years.

If this comparison between the wants of the soul and body holds good, it conveys a very serious thought. It signifies that the person who refuses or neglects to make use of the Sacraments, places his soul at least in a manner in the same position as the body is placed in when its natural wants are not supplied. Hence the necessity of making frequent use of these Sacraments which in the designs of Providence are intended as means by which we advance toward moral beauty of heart and soul.

BAPTISM.

Our Lord instituted the Sacrament of Baptism when He was baptized by St. John. Its reception became obligatory on all when He said: "Going, therefore, teach ye all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." It is absolutely necessary to receive it as a condition to en-

trance into the Kingdom of God, as we know from these words: "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God." Being the first Sacrament in point of reception, it is the entrance into the association of Christianity and the gateway to the Church. If validly received it washes away original sin and all actual sins which the recipient may have previously committed, if he has right sorrow for them, bringing him into the fold of the one true Shepherd, making him a Christian, a child of God and an heir of Heaven. There are three kinds of Baptism, namely, that of water which is ordinarily given; that of blood which is martyrdom for the Christian faith, and that of desire which is a longing to do all that God has ordained for salvation, and if we knew what He requires, we would willingly do it. But proper diligence must be shown in finding out the requirements of God for salvation.

On account of its absolute necessity, children are baptized as soon as they can be brought to the church with safety. This means as soon as possible without injuring the child's health. There is great danger in delay. Parents who postpone having their child baptized are assuming a great responsibility. The ceremonies of Baptism are most important and the parents should take the keenest interest in them. The father should always be present. It does not look well for his faith when he absents himself. The Christian name should be carefully selected and that of a saint given.

PRIVATE AND SOLEMN BAPTISM.

When Baptism is administered in the home without any of the customary ceremonies, it is called private Baptism, and no sponsors are necessary. Neither is it necessary to give the child a name. When it is given publicly in the church with all the ceremonies, it is called solemn, and one sponsor is required. Two sponsors are allowed, but not more than two, on account of the spiritual relationship contracted.

A lay person can give only private Baptism, and he does so by taking common water, pouring it on the head or forehead of the child, and at the same time saying with the intention of doing what the Church does: "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

Lay persons must not administer this Sacrament, except in cases of real necessity, that is, unless there is danger of death before the priest can be called or before he arrives. In these cases some one should baptize the child, but the father or mother should not baptize their own child, if there be anyone else present who can administer the Sacrament. A Catholic doctor or nurse is the best, or a Catholic who understands something about its administration. A gentleman should take precedence to a lady, unless the latter is better acquainted with the formula.

When a child is baptized in the home, that is, baptized privately, it must, in case of recovery, be brought

to the church to have the ceremonies supplied. These can be given only in the church.

CEREMONIES OF BAPTISM.

The ceremonies of Baptism are of very ancient origin. Some of them are of Apostolic tradition, while others are mentioned by the early Fathers of the Church. Each of them has a deep meaning, and their usage since the early Christian period has rendered them sacred in the eyes of Catholics.

It is not our purpose to here enter into an explanation of their nature and significance, but to merely mention these things which are of a practical import to the sponsors or parents, or to those being baptized if they are adults.

The sponsors or parents will be first asked what name they wish to give the child. The name of a saint should be selected. That saint will be the child's patron and intercessor as well as an example to follow. Hence a saint's name should be given. Then the following questions will be asked, and their answers are here given:

Question by Priest: What dost thou ask of the Church of God?

Answer by Sponsors: Faith.

Question by Priest: What doth Faith bring thee to?

Answer by Sponsors: Life everlasting.

A little further on they will be requested to say aloud the Apostles' Creed and the Our Father. It sometimes happens that some seem to have difficulty in

reciting them. They should be well known and repeated in a slow, distinct voice.

They will be asked to renounce Satan with all his works and pomps as follows:

Question by Priest: Dost thou renounce Satan?

Answer by Sponsors: I do renounce him.

Question by Priest: And all his works?

Answer by Sponsors: I do renounce them.

Question by Priest: And all his pomps?

Answer by Sponsors: I do renounce them.

Other questions and answers will be necessary just before pouring the water on the head of the child to be baptized. These are:

Question by Priest: Dost thou believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth?

Answer by Sponsors: I do believe.

Question by Priest: Dost thou believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son our Lord, who was born into this world and suffered for us?

Answer by Sponsors: I do believe.

Question by Priest: Dost thou believe in the Holy Ghost, the Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting?

Answer by Sponsors: I do believe.

Question by the Priest: Dost thou wish to be baptized?

Answer by the Sponsors: I do.

While the water is being poured on the head, the sponsors are required to physically touch the child. The ceremonies will conclude by the priest's giving a lighted

candle to the sponsors which they hold while he recites the last prayer and admonition. The English translation is very beautiful and significant, as follows: "Receive this burning light and keep thy Baptism so as to be without blame. Observe the Commandments of God, that, when our Lord shall come to his nuptials, thou mayest meet him, together with all the saints in the heavenly court, and mayest have life everlasting, and live forever and ever. Amen."

The above has reference to children. If the person to be baptized is an adult or has reached the use of reason, he answers the above questions, recites the Creed and the Our Father, and holds the candle himself. The sponsors only do what the child would do if it had the use of reason.

SPONSORS IN BAPTISM.

For private Baptism no sponsors are required. In the solemn administration of the Sacrament of Baptism there should be one, a man or a woman; but not more than two, a man and a woman. The Church forbids more than two on account of the spiritual relationship contracted. Such relationship is contracted with the child and with its parents. When there is only one sponsor, it is better that such sponsor be of the same sex as the child.

What is necessary to be a sponsor?

In order to act validly as a sponsor a person, first, must have the use of reason; secondly, must himself be

baptized; thirdly, must be designated as a sponsor by the parents or the pastor; fourthly, must touch physically the infant while the water is being poured on, doing so either personally or by proxy; fifthly, must have the intention to act as sponsor and to fulfill the duties attaching to such office.

What are the duties of sponsors?

They are obliged to act as teacher or moral guardian of the child in case the parents die or become separated from the child, or neglect it. Particularly they would be obliged to see that the child is instructed in its Catechism, that it makes its first Communion, is confirmed, and receives, if possible, a Catholic education. Those who become sponsors for children of mixed marriages must be especially watchful over them in case the Catholic parent should die. Sponsors are free from all obligation when it is prudently presumed that the baptized are properly instructed by their parents.

Can two men or two women act as sponsors?

No. The sponsors should be a man and a woman.

Who are forbidden to be sponsors?

The following are valid but not lawful sponsors: First, Religious who take solemn vows; secondly, a husband cannot be sponsor to his wife, nor a wife to her husband, nor parents to their children; thirdly, all persons of bad reputation or immoral character or who belong to forbidden societies.

May a Protestant act as sponsor or any heretic?

No. Not being instructed themselves in the true faith and having no love or reverence for it, such persons could not properly fulfill the duties of a sponsor.

When a child is baptized it should receive a Christian name, that is, the name of some saint. Parents should not select purely secular or profane names.

CONFIRMATION.

Confirmation is a Sacrament in which we receive the Holy Ghost with His divine gifts, and are made strong and perfect Christians and soldiers of Jesus Christ. It also imprints a spiritual mark on the soul.

Every Catholic is obliged under pain of sin to receive it, if it is within his power. The Bishop is the ordinary minister of this Sacrament, and the pastor will always make timely announcement when he is to come to the parish to administer it. All the children who have attained the proper age should present themselves for the purpose of being duly prepared for its reception. The Catechism must be thoroughly learned and such other instructions given as may enable the child to understand all that pertains to the worthy reception of this Sacrament. Parents should see that the child comes punctually to class and applies itself with diligence. Adults, no matter how old, and converts to the faith must present themselves also, and abide by the advice the priest gives them.

To receive this Sacrament worthily, we must be thoroughly instructed in its nature and effects, and be in a state of sanctifying grace, which means that the soul must be free from mortal sin. Hence the necessity of going to confession before-hand. It is customary for

children to make a retreat or triduum of three days previous to receiving Confirmation, and for adults, if they cannot make this retreat, to spend as much time as possible in prayer and religious exercises during these days.

Those who are to be confirmed should be dressed in a manner befitting the occasion, but no one must stay away because he cannot get such clothing. The circumstances should be told to the pastor. They must have a sponsor, though generally the pastor provides one—a gentleman for the boys and male adults, and a lady for the girls and adult women. Such sponsors contract a spiritual relationship as in Baptism.

A middle name may be given in Confirmation, and the name of a saint should be chosen. The candidate is given a card on which is plainly written the Christian name together with the name he wishes to select, which he holds in his hand as he approaches the Bishop. No one can be confirmed without the consent of the priest in charge or without this card which the priest will give him.

THE HOLY EUCHARIST.

The Holy Eucharist is the Sacrament which contains the body and blood, soul and divinity, of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, under the appearance of bread and wine. He instituted this Sacrament in the evening of Holy Thursday, the night before He died, when He and the twelve Apostles were assembled at the last supper.

On this occasion He took bread, blessed and broke it, saying: "Take ye and eat. This is my body." Then He took a cup of wine, blessed it and gave it to the Apostles, saying: "Drink ye all of this. This is my blood which shall be shed for the remission of sins. Do this for a commemoration of Me."

By the words, "Do this for a commemoration of Me," He gave his priests forever the power to change bread into His body and wine into His blood. This they do at the consecration of the Mass. The Holy Eucharist is a Sacrament in the form of Holy Communion and a sacrifice in the Mass. (See The Mass.)

THE MASS.

The Mass is the unbloody sacrifice of the body and blood of Christ. It is the same action which our Lord performed when at his last supper He changed bread and wine into His body and blood, and offered them up to His heavenly Father. He celebrated the first Mass ever said on earth. He then ordered His Apostles and through them the priests of His Church to do the self same thing to the end of time. He issued this important command: "Do this for a commemoration of Me." The action of doing this, or the function of fulfilling this command, is known to us as the Mass.

Our Lord at His last supper offered up His body and blood as an unbloody sacrifice; the Mass being the same action is likewise the unbloody sacrifice of His body and blood. But He did no more when He was

crucified on Calvary, except the manner was different. On Calvary He offered Himself up as a sacrifice to His Father by the real effusion of His blood and by His real death upon the cross. There is no actual effusion of blood nor real death in the Mass, but these are not essential to the sacrifice. The separate consecration of the bread and wine in the Mass represents the death of our Lord in a mystical manner. Hence the crucifixion and the Mass are one and the same sacrifice, for they do not differ in essential points. The victim is the same, Christ Jesus; the priest is the same, also Christ our Lord; and the ends are the same. We say the priest is the same, for though human ministers offer the sacrifice of the Mass, they consecrate not in their own but in the person of Christ. Invested with the character of Christ, they change the substance of bread and wine into His real body and blood.

Of all the blessings which our Lord has bequeathed to the world the Mass is the greatest and holiest, for it is an oblation of infinite value offered to God to honor and glorify Him, to praise and thank Him, to satisfy His divine justice, and to beseech Him to be kind and merciful and charitable towards us. "From the rising of the sun even to the going down, there is offered to My name a clean oblation."

MANNER OF HEARING MASS.

When present at Mass, we must remember that we are in the Temple of God and witnessing the Sacrifice of the Son of Man. We are in a sacred place and wit-

nessing a holy action. It is like being present at Calvary. Hence any levity, talking, whispering, gazing about, or unbecoming action is out of harmony with time and place. It is a time and place for prayer and thoughtful recollection. The prayer book and rosary beads should never be forgotten.

There are various methods of hearing Mass. One is to follow the priest by saying the prayers in the prayer book, entitled "Ordinary of the Mass," or "Prayers at Mass." These should be said slowly and devoutly even though we cannot finish each part in the time the priest finishes his. Another method is to read out of the prayer book any prayers we like. Every one has favorite prayers or devotions that are best suited to his needs. In this method the Rosary may be said, meditating carefully on the different mysteries. Still another method is a heart to heart talk with God. Compose your own prayers according to your needs, speak to God as if He were present, as He is in the Sacrament of the Altar, take resolutions to do better, make acts of faith, hope, charity and contrition, or meditate on the life and passion of our Lord. This is a difficult method. There are many things to distract the attention, and cause the mind to rove on foreign subjects. He who can do it, however, derives great spiritual benefit.

Above all things, do not spend the time in church by idly gazing about, standing around the doors, kneeling on one knee in the aisles, never saying a prayer, last in and first out.

ATTENDANCE AT MASS.

There is a specific law of the Church to the effect that Catholics must under the pain of grievous sin be present at Mass every Sunday and holy day of obligation, except for very good and sufficient reasons. No vain excuse, nor trifling cause, nor passing inconvenience is to interfere with attendance.

The one who does not go to Mass on these occasions has already drifted away from his Church, and the one who is lax about his duty in this regard becomes careless, cold and indifferent in religious matters generally. While there is no obligation of going daily, there are many who can and should do so. Daily Mass is a great means for the acquisition of sanctity and holiness. But never be absent on Sundays and holy days of obligation. Be punctually on time, for you should be present at the whole of the Mass service, and those who are not present from the beginning to the end are not without fault. But you do not keep the precept and offend grievously if you omit a notable part of it, generally considered from the Offertory. In fulfilling the obligation of hearing Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation, it is not permitted to hear parts of one Mass and parts of another, except one is present at the Consecration and Communion of one Mass.

CONGREGATIONAL ATTITUDES.

The congregation assume different attitudes or postures during the several parts of divine services. The most common are kneeling, standing, sitting and genu-

flecting. Each has a significance that is in a manner expressive of the meaning of what is taking place.

As a rule, the congregation kneel while adoring, praying or during solemn moments. They sit while listening, as when the epistle or a lesson is being read or when the priest is speaking. They stand when they are supposed to show a willingness to follow or obey or when receiving tidings of joy. Hence they stand during the reading of a gospel to show a willingness to follow its teachings and an appreciation of what it contains. St. Paul says: "Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breast plate of justice, and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace." Such an attitude shows a readiness to follow the gospel precepts or obey the word of God.

Genuflecting is an act of worship or adoration. There are two kinds of genuflections, the simple and the profound. The former is bending one knee till it touches the floor with a slight inclination of the head and shoulders; the latter is bending both knees to the floor with a profound inclination of the head and shoulders.

The attitudes of the congregation required by the Church during religious exercises express a meaning in harmony with that particular part of the service.

ATTITUDES AT LOW MASS.

When we speak of a low Mass, a high Mass or a solemn high Mass, we do not mean that they are separate or different Masses designated by these terms. They are one and the same Mass, but celebrated in a different manner. In a low Mass all the parts are read and the ceremonies are simple.

The congregation are supposed to kneel all the time during this Mass, except to stand during the gospels, but it is customary to observe the following, except where diocesan regulations prescribe otherwise: Stand when the priest comes into the sanctuary. Kneel when he comes to the foot of the altar to begin Mass.

Sit during the reading of the epistle, and while the priest is preaching or making announcements. Stand during the reading of the gospel and Credo. Genuflect at the "et incarnatus est" during the Credo. Sit during the offertory to the Sanctus. Kneel at the Sanctus and remain kneeling until the priest takes the second ablution. That will be after he has received Communion himself and given Communion to the people. At the first ring of the bell at the consecration, when the priest genuflects, bow the head reverently in adoration. Then as the priest elevates the Sacred Host, raise the head and look at the Sacred Host as it is being elevated and repeat the words: "My Lord and my God!" An indulgence is attached to these words. During the rest of the consecration reverently bow the head in adoration. Strike the breast gently in a spirit of unworthiness at the "Domine non sum dignus." Kneel when the priest gives the blessing. Stand during the

last gospel and genuflect at the words "et verbum caro factum est." Kneel when the priest comes down to the foot of the altar to say the prayers after Mass and remain kneeling until he has finished them and withdrawn from the sanctuary.

ATTITUDES AT HIGH MASS.

A high Mass is one in which some of the parts are sung by the priest and the choir takes part in the singing.

Rise when the priest comes into the sanctuary.

Kneel when he sings the Asperges.

Stand while the congregation are being sprinkled with holy water and remain standing until after the prayer which follows the Asperges is sung.

Kneel when he commences Mass.

Sit during the singing of the Kyrie if the priest is seated.

Stand during the reading of the Gloria and sit during the singing of it by the choir if the priest is seated.

Stand at the "Dominus vobiscum" after the Gloria and remain standing until after the prayer or prayers that follow.

Sit during the reading of the epistle.

Stand at the Gospel and until the Credo is said, genuflecting at the words "et incarnatus est," and sit while it is being sung by the choir if the priest is seated, kneeling at the words "et incarnatus est."

Sit while the priest is preaching or making the announcements.

Stand when the priest sings "Dominus vobiscum" after the Credo and remain so until he sings "Oremus."

Sit until the priest sings "Per omnia saecula saeculorum."

Stand during the singing of the Preface.

Kneel when the bell rings at the Sanctus and remain kneeling until the second ablution after the priest receives Holy Communion, acting at the consecration in the same manner as at low Mass, and striking the breast at the "Domine, non sum dignus."

Sit until the priest sings "Dominus vobiscum."

Then stand until he has sung the prayer or prayers.

Kneel at the blessing.

Stand at the last Gospel and genuflect at the words "et verbum caro factum est." At the end of the last Gospel all should kneel and remain kneeling until the priest has left the sanctuary.

ATTITUDES AT SOLEMN HIGH MASS.

A Mass is called solemn high when parts of it are sung by the celebrant and the choir take part in the singing, and the former is assisted by a deacon and sub-deacon. Two priests generally act as deacon and sub-deacon. The ceremonies are more elaborate than in other Masses.

The same attitudes should be observed at a solemn high Mass as at a high Mass with the following exceptions: The people do not stand while the celebrant is reading the Gospel but only when the deacon sings it.

They stand when they are being incensed at the offertory.

ATTITUDES AT REQUIEM MASSES.

A requiem Mass is a Mass for the dead. Requiem means rest in the sense of eternal rest with God in Heaven. There are special Masses for the dead and in saying them the celebrant always bears black vestments. When it is a low Mass the same attitudes are observed as at other low Masses. When it is a high Mass or solemn high Mass, the following should be observed:

Kneel from the beginning to the epistle, except you may sit while the choir sings the Kyrie if the priest is seated.

Sit during the singing of the "Dies Irae" if the priest is seated.

Stand during the Gospel.

Sit at the Offertory till the priest sings "Per omnia saecula saeculorum."

Stand during the Preface.

Kneel at the Sanctus and remain kneeling until the second ablution after the priest's Communion, when you sit.

Kneel during the singing of the prayer or prayers.

Stand at the last Gospel genuflecting at the words "et verbum caro factum est."

Kneel at the end of the last Gospel and remain kneeling until the priest leaves the sanctuary or goes to the bench to vest for the "Liberation" or absolution for the dead, in case it is given,

When the Libera or absolution is given you may sit while the priest vests or until he comes before the altar. Stand all during the Libera till the end. Sit during the sermon if there be one.

CONDUCT IN CHURCH.

The church is the house of God. It is an edifice dedicated to the worship of the Most High, and sanctified by the presence of our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. It is, therefore, a place where not only respect and reverence must be shown, but where humility and meekness should be the predominating influences of the heart. There should be no talking, whispering, noise, disturbance, or any kind of misdemeanor. Silence should reign supreme and a devotional bearing be manifested by all. Gazing about, greeting acquaintances, holding conversation with them, endeavoring to attract attention, or doing anything unbecoming or that will cause distraction is entirely out of place.

Always go forward and occupy a pew towards the front, provided the rights of pew holders are not infringed upon. Pews are reserved at certain services for the use of those who rent them, and it is unjust to persist in occupying them on these occasions. But when their rights are respected, it is best to go up towards the front. Those nearest the altar hear Mass the best. The custom of remaining around the doors or standing in the aisles when there are vacant pews to be occupied, is entirely improper. It causes inconvenience and is a

source of annoyance to those who are coming into the church or leaving it. Besides it is discourteous.

Those who offend in this manner seldom hear Mass properly. They stand and gaze about as unconcerned as if they were in a town hall. They never use a prayer book, nor do they seem to possess a prayerful, devotional spirit. People should not congregate around the doors, nor in the aisles, nor in the vestibule, congesting the passage ways and blocking the exits and entrances, to the great inconveniences of the congregation. Never be late to the services. Be punctually on time, and if present before the services begin, occupy the time by praying or reading the prayer book.

Catholic people are distinguished the world over for the respect they show and the decorum they manifest in their churches, and these words are intended only for the few, not for the many. When the church is regarded as the house of God and the dwelling place of our Lord in the Sacrament of the altar, and Catholics regard it as such, there is little likelihood of any frivolous or unbecoming conduct.

USING THE PRAYER BOOK.

A prayer book is a necessary companion at church. Everybody should have one while attending religious exercises and make use of it, especially at the Mass. In every prayer book will be found devotional reading suitable to the wants and tastes of different classes of people. We should become familiar with the several parts so as to make them, in a way, our own. This is especially

true of that part entitled the "Ordinary of the Mass," which is a translation of the different parts of the Mass, and by noting the accompanying explanations they can be followed along as the priest proceeds, each passage, psalm and prayer being read at the same time with him. By doing this the great Sacrifice of the altar will be more fully understood, more clearly apprehended and better appreciated. The fruits and graces will be correspondingly greater. Read devoutly and slowly, even though you cannot finish reading the passage by the time the priest has finished the part to which it corresponds.

To enter thoroughly into the spirit of the services, the prayer book is absolutely necessary at church. Always have it with you. Do not be ashamed to carry it with you. Occupy your time in church by carefully reading its contents and try to enter into the meaning it conveys. Many people come to church seemingly for no other purpose than to sit and gaze about. They do not pray, nor read, nor try to enter into the spirit of the mysteries of their religion. They sit or stand as cold and motionless as statues. While these fulfill in a perfunctory manner the obligation of hearing Mass, they derive but little benefit from their attendance.

If for any reason the prayer book is not at hand, take out your rosary beads and say the Rosary carefully, meditating on the mysteries. Always carry your beads about your person. Keep them in your pocket at all times. Never be without them. Parents should see that their children come to church provided with these articles of devotion. How disedifying to see children

sitting in the pews and staring at others, or standing around the doors or in the corners with their hands in their pockets! Parents are largely accountable for such conduct.

PASSING A CHURCH.

It is customary among Catholics for men to raise their hats and women to slightly bow the head on passing a church where the Blessed Sacrament is kept. This is done as a mark of reverence to our divine Lord. The church is His dwelling place. He remains there day and night as a prisoner in the tabernacle, not a prisoner against His will, but as a willing prisoner, or rather a prisoner of love.

We have a friendly smile and a joyous greeting for our neighbor or friend, when we chance to meet him, but here is One who is better to us than any neighbor or friend or even kindred, and it is only reasonable and proper that we should manifest some external token or sign of reverence when we pass those temples wherein He resides.

FUNERALS.

The Church has the greatest solicitude for the dead. Her regard for them is shown in the loving benediction in which they are held and the prayers offered in their behalf. The solemn rites of her burial services are chanted for the repose of their souls, and their remains are placed in consecrated ground. To gather the dead

close to her, it has long been customary when possible to have their last resting place around or near the church edifice. How significant is this custom of selecting the ground around the church for a cemetery! The Church is watching over the dead. She gathers them close to her and is constantly praying for them. The people hear Mass on Sundays and then go out into the "church yard" and kneeling down by the little mounds pray for their departed friends and relatives. In cities, especially large ones, this custom cannot be put in force.

As the Sacrifice of the altar is most beneficial to the departed, it should, if in any way possible, be celebrated at the funerals of all adults or those who have reached the use of reason. Even the remains of little children who have not reached the age of reason should be brought to the church and funeral services held over them. The funeral services should take place from the parish church. Before announcing the time and place of these services the pastor must be seen and full arrangements made with him.

If this be not done, serious inconvenience may result. There may be two funerals on the same day; the laws of the Church may forbid a Mass to be said on the day selected; or the party to be buried, about to be placed in consecrated ground, must have a right to such a privilege. The privilege of receiving Catholic burial must be denied to those who die in infidelity, heresy or schism; to those who are excommunicated and die evidently impenitent; to those who, unless deprived of their reason, take their own lives and die without re-

penting; to those who die in a duel even though they repent before death; and also to unbaptized children.

All others should be buried in a Catholic cemetery, if there be one in the place, otherwise they cannot be buried with the rites of their Church, except in the case of a convert whose relatives have a lot in a non-Catholic cemetery and they wish to bury him in it, and the same exception extends to Catholics who had a lot in a non-Catholic cemetery previous to 1853 or who have since acquired one without any intention of violating the ecclesiastical law. To determine who should receive Catholic burial, a permit must in all cases be issued by the pastor.

When full arrangements have been made as to the time and manner of services, the funeral should be on hand punctually at the time specified. Funerals should not be held on Sundays or holy days of obligation, if they can in any way be avoided. If held on such days, Mass cannot be said, except where there are many priests and the funeral Mass will not in any way interfere with the Masses for the people. Such a thing can rarely happen in our churches.

The casket should not be opened in the church. Regalia of societies forbidden by the Church should not be worn. It is against the spirit of the Church to decorate the casket with flowers. Simplicity and reverence are recommended instead of expensive outlay or extravagant show.

ANNIVERSARIES.

An anniversary is the yearly occurrence of a certain event. It also applies to the annual celebration held in memory of the event. It is, however, used here in a more restricted sense and means what is done for a deceased person on the yearly recurrence of the day of his death. It is a mile-stone reminding us of our duty to pray for the departed. On such an occasion the Church encourages the faithful to have the divine Sacrifice of the Mass offered up for the repose of their souls.

There is a special anniversary Mass and it is always said in black vestments on such an occasion, provided the rubrics will allow it. Whether it can be said or not depends upon the excellency of the feast celebrated that day. The saints have feast days, and these are so numerous that they take up almost every day of the year, though not exclusively. Some of them are more important than others, and when the feast is not considered of great importance, relatively speaking, for everything that pertains to the saints of God's kingdom is important, the Mass of that day can be omitted and the priest is free to select one of his choice. By this is not meant that there is an entirely different Mass for every day of the year. Its essential parts are always the same. Only minor parts are different for each Mass, such as the prayers, the epistle, gospel, etc.

The priest will always say the anniversary Mass if he is allowed to do so by the rubrics, but if he cannot do this he can offer up the regular Mass of the day for the departed, no matter what color of vestments he wears.

From the very beginning the Church has recommended a high or solemn high Mass for the dead, not only on the day of the funeral, but also on the third, seventh and thirtieth day thereafter, as well as on the anniversary. The Christian name of the deceased is inserted in the prayers of the Mass said at the funeral and on the third, seventh and thirtieth day. Here, then, is a recommendation as well as the constant practice of the Church that must have sound reasons to commend it. The Church teaches that the Sacrifice of the altar is of infinite value and can satisfy not only for the sins of one soul, but for the sins of all mankind, and can deliver not one soul, but all the souls in Purgatory. But she knows, too, that God in His inscrutable wisdom applies the fruit of the Mass only according to our dispositions, to the dispositions of the souls for whom it is offered and the circumstances which He in his infinite wisdom alone can understand. Yet the Church requires these solemn Masses, and thereby proclaims at least implicitly that these services and ceremonies and additional splendor of exterior worship have a value apart, independent of the value of the Sacrifice which honors the majesty of God and redounds to His greater glory.

We should be careful, therefore, to remember the anniversaries of those who were near and dear to us. It is a Christian duty. We can help the departed in no other way than by praying for them and by our good works, and the most efficacious means of rendering them assistance is the Holy Mass, where Jesus is sacrificed for the sins of the world.

“THE MONTH’S MIND.”

By the “month’s mind” is understood what is done for a deceased person on the thirtieth day from his death. It is the monthly remembrance of the departed. The same Mass is said as at the funeral, except the prayers are different. The Christian name of the deceased is inserted in these prayers.

The Church recommends the solemn services of religion on such an occasion, as also on the third and seventh day, as well as on the anniversary. A high Mass should be offered up if it is in any way possible. The more solemn the services of religion, the more is God thereby honored. Moreover, the time is favorable for ardent prayer. It is not too close to death to cause distraction by its necessary accompaniments, nor yet so far away as to cool the ardor of love. We are possibly better prepared to pray at the end of a month than at any other time. Do not neglect this favorable opportunity.

VESTMENTS.

While celebrating Mass, the priest is clothed with amice, alb, cincture, stole, maniple and chasuble. These articles of dress are called vestments. They have been used in celebrating Mass since early times and their exclusiveness for this purpose makes them sacred in the eyes of Catholics. Besides this exclusiveness there is a becomingness in them and a symbolism attached to them that make them most appropriate in celebrating the mysteries of religion.

The amice is a white linen cloth worn about the shoulders and neck. It symbolizes "the helmet of salvation." The alb is a large white garment covering the person from the neck to the feet, and is typical of purity. This garment is held in place by a cincture or cord about the waist. It is made to represent the rope by which our Savior was led to execution. The maniple is a piece of linen cloth suspended to the priest's left arm, and is made to represent the cord with which our Savior's hands were bound. The stole is a long piece of cloth which is passed over the shoulders and rests on the breast in the form of a cross. In this connection it is symbolical of the yoke of Christ. The chasuble is the large outer garment which is generally considered to symbolize charity. The cross woven into it puts us in mind of Christ carrying the cross.

The maniple, stole and chasuble worn by the priest must be of the same color, but sets of these vestments are made in different colors to suit varying occasions. There is a becomingness in the colors of the garments worn at the altar. This follows from the establishment of festivals or "feast days," on which saints, mysteries or events of a religious character are commemorated. The Church commemorates by requiring the priest to say a particular Mass that day and his Office in honor of the saint, mystery or particular event, and in some cases by requiring the people to rest from labor and attend religious services. Nearly every day of the year is taken up by these feasts, and the color of the vestments is prescribed accordingly and marked in a small book known as the "Ordo." White is used for the joyous

mysteries of our Lord and the festivals of the Blessed Virgin and the saints who were not martyred. Red is used on Whitsunday and the festivals of the martyrs which indicate the shedding of blood and the ardor of charity. Green is used when the office is known as a "feria," that is, no special feast is held. Violet is used in seasons of repentance and black for the dead.

Feasts are arranged according to their excellency. Some are relatively more important than others. If a feast is not of great importance, relatively speaking, it is marked "simplex," and on such days the priest is allowed to omit the Mass of that day and select one of his own choice. If he is to offer up the Mass for the dead, he will mostly select the Mass for the dead and wear black. If he is not free to select such a Mass, he can always and on every day of the year offer up for the dead any Mass, no matter what the color of the vestments may be. Of course he will mostly select the Mass for the dead if he can.

Special privileges are granted for funerals, anniversaries and such like occasions, but generally the above rules prevail.

HOLY COMMUNION.

Holy Communion is receiving the Holy Eucharist or the body and blood of our Lord, under the appearance of bread and wine. Two things are necessary to receive it worthily, namely, to be in a state of sanctifying grace, (which means the soul's freedom from mortal sin), and to be fasting from midnight. Persons in dan-

ger of death are not required to fast. Anything taken in the form of food or drink, medicine included, will break the fast. Water taken into the mouth for cleansing purposes, either to rinse the mouth or clean the teeth, and not swallowed, does not break the fast. According to a recent decree, persons who are sick for a month without hope of speedy recovery, may, with the consent of their confessor, receive Holy Communion once or twice a month after partaking of some liquid food (*per modum potus*). The same privilege is extended to religious who dwell in houses where the Blessed Sacrament is kept or where the privilege of saying Mass is enjoyed. Such religious when sick for a month without hope of speedy recovery, may, with the consent of their confessor, receive Holy Communion once or twice a week after breaking the fast as above stated.

Confession is necessary when we are guilty of any offense we may think is mortal. But no one should go to Communion without confession, or at least getting permission from their confessor. Those who go frequently and especially when feast days or notable occasions come closely together, may easily get such permission. While we receive Holy Communion worthily when free from mortal sin, we more worthily receive it and are recipients of a greater abundance of divine favors when we are free from venial sin and all affection for sin. The purer the soul, the more abundant the fruits.

Some time should be spent in prayer, about fifteen minutes, before receiving. The dress should be becoming the excellency of the Sacrament. But never stay away from the altar because circumstances prevent you

from dressing as well as others more fortunate in worldly affairs.

Go up to the altar rail to receive Holy Communion when the bell rings three times at the "Domine, non sum dignus." Fold your hands before your breast and cast the eyes downward. Do not genuflect at the pew, but wait until you come to the altar rail. Observe the same on returning. If a society or class go in a body, be careful not to break their ranks. Many will break through their ranks causing great disorder. Kneel at the center of the rail, unless it is occupied by others. This prevents the priest going from one end of the rail to another to accommodate one or two.

Do not receive Holy Communion if you get sick in the church, especially if the stomach is disturbed. If Holy Communion is given before Mass to accommodate a few, do not receive if it is possible to wait for the Mass.

The Holy Father urges the faithful to receive Communion frequently and daily, as the most effective means to acquire holiness and sanctity.

RECEIVING HOLY COMMUNION.

When the priest, turning towards the congregation, elevates the Sacred Host, and says "Domine, non sum dignus," repeat, rather from the heart than from the lips, the following words which are an English translation of the same: "Lord, I am not worthy that thou should enter under my roof, but say only the word, and

my soul shall be healed." Then with sentiments of profound faith, kneel close to the rail, take the communion cloth or card in both hands so as to be extended horizontally under the chin, and with head erect and eyes modestly cast down, receive the Sacred Host from the hands of the priest. Endeavor to swallow it as soon as possible without touching it with the teeth or fingers. If a communion card is used, and no altar boy is holding it, pass it as soon as you have received to the next one at your left. If an altar boy is holding it, keep your hands joined together.

The idea of an altar cloth or card is to prevent the Sacred Host, or any particles, from falling on the floor, and so it should be held in a position with this end in view.

If other communicants are still coming, and need to occupy your place, retire shortly after receiving, and make room for them; otherwise, you may remain at the rail until the priest closes the tabernacle, or if it be outside of Mass, until he gives the blessing.

Do not pitch the head forward after receiving, but lower it gently. The communion cloth should not be kissed or pressed to the lips.

AFTER HOLY COMMUNION.

When you have left the communion rail, make a simple genuflection on the floor, and retire to your pew. There is no need to make another genuflection at the pew. Now your thanksgiving begins. Remember you

are entertaining your divine Savior. You should first begin by adoration, then pass to thanksgiving, then asking him for any special benefits you may need.

This thanksgiving should last for at least fifteen minutes after receiving. If you cannot make it in your own words, take up the prayer book and read the prayers entitled "Prayers After Communion." During this time you should be most recollected, allowing nothing to distract you or to cause the mind to wander. Try to realize you are entertaining your God.

Do not expectorate or leave the church for fifteen minutes after receiving. It is great irreverence to the Holy Sacrament to immediately leave the church. It is even sometimes too soon to leave after Mass, though it depends upon the number of communicants. If there are a large number and you are among the first, sufficient time will have elapsed before Mass is ended. The general rule is to spend fifteen minutes in thanksgiving, whether Mass is ended or not.

A most salutary prayer is the following of St. Ignatius:

Soul of Christ, sanctify me!

Body of Christ, save me!

Blood of Christ, inebriate me!

Water flowing from the side of Christ, cleanse me!

Passion of Christ, strengthen me!

O, good Jesus, hear me!

In thy holy wounds, conceal me!

And let me not be separated from thee!

From the wicked enemy, defend me!

In the hour of death, call me!

And bid me, Lord, to come to thee!
That with thy saints and angels I may praise thee!
Throughout the ages of eternity. Amen.

FIRST HOLY COMMUNION.

The reception of Holy Communion for the first time is a most important event in a child's life. From it accrue benefits that are priceless, and around it are thrown memories that are cherished throughout life. It is a supreme moment for the child.

It is well to make it as solemn and effective as possible, and parents should co-operate with the clergy to this end. Nothing should be left undone to impress upon the child's mind the meaning and excellency of the Sacrament which contains the body and blood of the Savior of the world.

There is no exact age that children must attain before being admitted to first Communion, but it is generally between the years of ten and twelve. They should be well instructed in the rudiments of their faith. Hence they must know the Catechism well. So necessary is it for them to be thoroughly well versed in it that they ought to begin to learn it from their earliest years. This can be easily done if they are sent to a Catholic school. Where there is no Catholic school they ought to be sent to Sunday school. The latter, however, is wholly inadequate for proper religious training.

Besides such remote preparation, there is always a proximate preparation, consisting of special instructions

in the Catechism. Children of proper age are organized into a class which is held daily until the date of first Communion. When the formation of the class is announced, parents are in conscience bound to see that the children who should make their first Communion join it at once. They are also in duty bound to see that they come regularly, and to familiarize themselves with the progress made. This can be done by hearing them recite their lessons, reviewing occasionally what has been gone over, or if need be, inquiring of the priest in charge. More solicitude should be shown both on the part of the child and parents as the day of Communion approaches. If a child does not know its Catechism, the priest may be obliged to fulfill the painful obligation of postponing the date of first Communion for another year. It is very important to put nothing in the way of the child's regular attendance at class. A very little thing will be seized upon as an excuse for absence. All pretexts should be removed, and the child encouraged in every way possible.

Not only must the child be instructed in its faith, but it should endeavor during this time of preparation to become good and virtuous and holy by being more devout in its religious exercises, more obedient to superiors, more charitable, and especially more persistent in eradicating any bad habits or disagreeable traits of character.

Children should be dressed well as becomes the excellency of the Sacrament, but not for display or show. Such would cause pride and vanity. All should conform to the regulations prescribed, so there will be

no distinction,—the girls dressed in white with wreath and veil, and the boys in a becoming suit of black. If the child's worldly circumstances are such that it cannot comply with the regulations, the fact should be made known to the pastor.

A retreat or triduum of three days immediately preceding the day of the first Communion is generally made. These are precious days during which the child makes special preparation by prayer and religious exercises to receive its Lord and Master. Much depends upon this retreat. Here parents and other members of the household can be great helps towards its success. During these days they should do nothing to disturb the atmosphere of quiet and holy calm that surrounds the child. There should be no entertainments nor parties nor any levity nor useless conversation, nor should the child be asked to do anything that would cause distraction or be subjected to anything that will arouse ill-feeling. A retreat is a time of prayer and solitude.

Every child should be provided with a prayer book and rosary beads for first Communion. Enrollment in the scapular generally follows, and in this case a pair of scapulars must be provided.

Children and parents are not to infer that when first Communion is made the Catechism is to be left aside. They should continue to study for at least a year or two afterwards. And they should not neglect to receive the Holy Sacrament frequently. To receive once a month is a splendid practice. The best means to insure monthly Communion for the children is to have them join the sodalities specially designated for them, namely, the

Children of Mary for the girls, and St. Aloysius' Sodality for the boys.

EASTER DUTY.

According to the laws of the Church, Catholics are obliged under the pain of grievous sin, to go to confession at least once a year and receive Holy Communion each year during the Easter time. In this country that time is from the first Sunday in Lent to Trinity Sunday, both included. As the season of Lent and the feast of the Holy Trinity are both movable, the precise date cannot be given, but every one knows when Lent comes, and Trinity Sunday falls in May or June. The period is amply sufficient to suit all classes. Their exact dates are generally announced in all churches.

The law of going to Communion once a year is very important and urgent. Complying with it is called making one's "Easter duty." It binds all persons without distinction, who have made their first Communion and are of sound mind. Even the sick and infirm are not exempt. The Blessed Sacrament must be brought to them. They must notify the priest so he can bring them Holy Communion in their homes. The duty of notifying him rests with the sick or their friends or relatives. It is not necessary that the sick or infirm be in danger of death. It suffices that either on account of their sickness or infirmity or the decrepitude of old age, they are unable to come to the church. Notice should be given the priest in ample time, and not put off till the last moment.

The law does not require a person to go to Holy Communion on Easter Sunday, but it is a most excellent practice to receive on that day or on Holy Thursday. Neither is there any obligation of receiving the Blessed Sacrament on Christmas, but here again the practice of doing so is most salutary and beneficial. An earnest effort should, therefore, be made to approach the communion table on the great religious festivals of Christmas and Easter. Every Catholic should wilfully and cheerfully fulfill his obligation in this regard, and should not postpone it to the last day.

ADORATION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.

Supreme adoration must be given to the Blessed Sacrament, because it contains God. By the Blessed Sacrament is meant the consecrated bread. It is kept in the tabernacle of the altar. A light, called the sanctuary light, is always burning before it or by the side of it.

Because supreme adoration must be given to the Blessed Sacrament, Catholics genuflect when coming into its presence, when leaving its presence, or passing before the altar where it is kept. There are two kinds of genuflections, namely, the simple and the profound. The former is bending one knee till it touches the floor with a slight inclination of the head and shoulders, the latter is bending both knees to the floor with a profound inclination of the head and shoulders.

The principle to be followed in determining which

genuflection to make is that the simple one is made when the Blessed Sacrament is not exposed to view, as when it is preserved in the tabernacle; the profound genuflection is made where the Blessed Sacrament is exposed to view, as at the Forty Hours' Adoration, during Benediction, or when it is carried in procession. Those, however, who receive Holy Communion need make but a simple genuflection when coming to and leaving the altar rail.

By coming into the presence of the Blessed Sacrament is generally meant coming into the church, chapel or place where it is kept. It is not necessary to make the genuflection at the door, but at the pew or place to be occupied. If you go up to the altar or altar-rail, do not genuflect at the pew, but wait till you arrive at the altar or altar-rail; when returning genuflect at the altar or altar-rail, and not at the pew.

By leaving the presence of the Blessed Sacrament is generally meant leaving the church, chapel or place where it is kept. Make the genuflection just as you depart, in the pew or by the pew. It may cause serious inconvenience to others to genuflect at the door, either coming in or going out.

By passing before the Blessed Sacrament is meant passing before the altar where it is kept, or crossing from one side of the church to the other. In such cases a simple genuflection should be made before the altar. Every one in the church should kneel when the Blessed Sacrament is carried from one place to another or in procession. This is notably true on Holy Thursday and at the Forty Hours' Adoration.

THE SACRAMENTS OF THE SICK.

When the priest arrives to administer the sacraments to the sick or dying, if you perceive he has the Sacred Host, kneel down in adoration to it. It would be better to have some one meet him with a lighted candle at the door. Do not begin to talk in a noisy or familiar manner, but let somebody show the way to the sickroom, and the rest follow in silence and in a spirit of adoration. If it is necessary to speak, let it be done in a low and reverential manner. If the confession of the sick person is to be heard, as is generally the case, upon a signal from the priest, all should withdraw from the room. When his confession is heard, all should come back to the room again, or if the room be small, in the adjoining rooms, and remain kneeling until the sacraments are administered.

It does not look well to have the priest give the last rites of religion to the sick, especially Holy Communion, while some of the members of the family are talking, doing their ordinary work, or running about the house. All should be present in the sick chamber, if circumstances permit, in a prayerful and reverential attitude.

After the sacraments are given, do not remain to distract the sick person by carrying on a conversation, or walking about the room, but leave him alone to make his thanksgiving in quiet. Sometimes, however, especially when he is very feeble or unable to read, it is better for some one to be with him, before and after

Communion, and read for him slowly and distinctly short, necessary prayers.

SICK CALLS.

A "sick call" means sending for the priest to attend to the religious needs of the sick or dying. Those who are in poor health are thus given an opportunity to comply with their religious obligations, and the dying to receive the last consolations of their religion. The sick generally have their confession heard and receive Holy Communion if they so desire. The dying in addition to confession, are anointed with holy oil, receive Holy Communion under the form of the Viaticum, and are given the last blessing and plenary indulgence. These are what are commonly called the "last sacraments." The importance attached to these calls is so great that in most parishes, a priest is always assigned to such work.

When there is danger of death, and many diseases are always dangerous, notify the priest at once. Do not wait till the evening. Do not call at night, unless there is danger in delay. Do not send a child, if it can be avoided. A grown person is better to send. It is always best to inform the sick person of the priest's coming, but this should be done cautiously, at least in some cases. He can then prepare himself. The one who is not prepared receives the sacraments in a perfunctory manner and does not derive so much fruit from them.

The one calling for the priest should be able to give the sick person's name and address, his age and condition, also to state whether he has been attended before, and what sacraments he has received, if any, and when. It is likewise important for the priest to know whether he is conscious, and, if attended by a physician, what in his opinion of the sick man's condition.

No one should speak to the priest when he is going on a sick call, unless the latter begins the conversation. He may be carrying the Blessed Sacrament.

It is not necessary to bless them or call the priest for infants if they are baptized, unless to read some prayers over them. But it is necessary if they have attained the use of reason, that is, about the age of seven or sometimes younger.

ADVICE TO THE SICK.

When sickness comes upon you, it should be received as from the hands of God with the same disposition that prompted our Lord to receive the bitter cup of suffering from the hands of His heavenly Father. Say with Him: "Not my will, but thine be done." In this way your will is united to the divine will. Pray for resignation, patience and courage.

In sickness, the first consideration should be the soul's salvation. Seek to reconcile yourself to God in good time by a sincere and contrite confession, and if your confessor approves, a general one. Above all things do not delay until the sickness becomes so severe

as to exclude proper dispositions. Such is often the case. The disease gets such a hold that the mind does not think, except in a confused and disconnected manner, and the heart is not moved. The disease may reach such a degree of intensity as to make a good confession very difficult or impossible.

Receive Holy Communion as most beneficial to soul and body, and as the best support on your way to eternity. Welcome your Savior as your best friend and helper. Many think Extreme Unction necessarily means death. It does not. It means danger, but to receive it does not imply that you are going to die. It may mean that you are going to live, for the Church expressly teaches that it may be instrumental in restoring the body to health, if God sees fit, and especially if He sees that such restored health will be good for the soul's salvation. But apart from such a great natural blessing, this Sacrament certainly purifies the soul from sin and strengthens it for the last conflict.

This does not imply that you are not to make use of a physician and of his remedies. Nor does it mean that you are not to arrange your temporal affairs. But it signifies that in sickness where there is the least danger, the soul's welfare should be your first concern.

During your sickness you should carefully review your past life, and if anything troubles your conscience, send again for your confessor, so that nothing may be left undone. If you are not able to say long prayers, repeat short ejaculations or say the Rosary or think of the sufferings of Christ. Always have the rosary and a crucifix at hand. Care not what other people say or

think. You are preparing for the long, last journey, upon which so much depends. Ask the saints, to whom you had a liking in life, to pray for you in death.

If your sickness is of long duration, ask your confessor to visit you frequently, and to bring you from time to time Holy Communion.

PREPARATION OF THE SICK.

The ravages of disease on the human system is permitted by God. When sickness comes, we should take it as coming from the hands of our heavenly Father, and bear it in a spirit of humility and penance. There is no period of life when we can merit more than in times of sickness, if we have the proper spirit.

When sick persons are to receive the sacraments, they should be well prepared. It is an easy matter when there is no fear of death. In this case spend as much time as possible in devotional exercises, be in readiness to make your confession, and be prepared if Communion is to be given. Under certain conditions, sick persons may receive Holy Communion when not fasting, provided their confessor allows them to do so. (See Holy Communion.) After Communion spend some time in thanksgiving.

When there is danger of death, it is a more serious affair. The priest should be sent for without delay, and the sick person informed of his coming, so he can duly prepare himself for the reception of the last sacraments, that is, Extreme Unction and the Viaticum. He

can also dispose himself for receiving the last blessing. This information about the priest's coming should be imparted prudently and cautiously, especially in certain forms of sickness. He should endeavor not to get excited, nor think that the last sacraments necessarily mean death. On the contrary they may, if God sees fit, be a powerful assistance in curing bodily ills; and in case it be God's will that death must come, they will most certainly strengthen and purify the soul, and give it courage and fortitude in the last moments upon which so much depends. Therefore, prepare for them as well as possible, by examining your conscience carefully, entertaining lively sentiments of faith, hope, love and contrition, uniting your will to the divine will and offering up your sickness as a penance for the sins of your past life. You should resolve that should you be restored to health, you will serve God more faithfully. The prayers in an ordinary prayer book will be a great help in this preparation.

If the sick person is too weak to prepare himself, some one should assist him by slowly reading the prayers for him in a calm, low voice. There is no excuse for those around him getting excited, crowding the room, or by their conduct and actions causing him to become confused and distracted. Let them bend all their efforts in a quiet, determined manner towards assisting him in every possible way to a most worthy reception of the sacraments. Those in danger of death need not be fasting to receive the Viaticum.

Request the priest to call again, and in the mean time, many things may come to your mind which

should be made matter of confession, and if your sickness runs through many days and weeks, request him to bring you Communion occasionally, but he is to judge how often.

ARRANGING THE SICK ROOM.

When the priest has been called to give Communion to the sick or administer the last sacraments to the dying, care should be taken to have everything rightly arranged in the sick room.

In the first place it should be clean, and everything offensive taken away. There should be no clothing lying scattered about, but neatly folded up and put away. The sick person should be decently covered, and the bed clothing arranged in good order. All useless and unsightly objects should be removed.

There are some necessary articles which should be in the sick room when the priest arrives. These are the following: A small table neatly covered with a white linen cloth; on the table two candles in candlesticks, a crucifix, a glass of fresh water and a spoon, holy water in a vase or cruet, and a clean, white napkin to serve as a communion cloth. The above articles are needed for Holy Communion or the Viaticum, but if Extreme Unction is to be administered, besides the above articles, there is still further need of some cotton on a plate, together with a bowl of water and a towel for the cleansing of the priest's fingers after the unctions.

HELPING THE DYING.

No moments are so supreme as the last moments of life; no journey is so great as the journey to eternity. The Church wishes the dying to receive all the spiritual help that she can give them. Through her representative, the priest, she forgives, encourages and strengthens those who are about to die. The priest should be sent for in good time in order that the last sacraments may be administered.

When it is clear that death is inevitable, if the sick person is in any way able, he should occupy himself entirely with his God, abandoning himself to His divine will, having absolute confidence in His great mercy, and making short, fervent acts of faith, hope, love and sorrow for his sins. If through physical exhaustion or want of mental concentration, he be unable to engage in prayer, some one should help him by either suggesting prayers or reading them for him in a slow, quiet, distinct manner, and asking him to follow in mind and heart. The prayers read should be in reference to faith, hope, love of God, and sorrow for sin. If he indicates that there is anything on his conscience, let the priest be sent for again.

Those in the death chamber should try to control their emotions, allay excitement and calm their feelings. They should bend all their efforts in a quiet, determined manner towards giving the dying all the religious assistance in their power. The room should not be crowded, anything that may distract should be removed, or any person that may bring up evil memories should

be excluded. The room should be quiet and religious, the attendants prayerful and in earnest. If there be time these preparations should not be left to the last moment. Have holy water, a blessed candle and a crucifix in the room. Have the prayer book at hand, and be familiar with the necessary prayers.

If the dying can pray, encourage him to do so by suggesting prayers and aspirations; if he cannot, then pray for him and try to make him follow in mind.

When you think the end is drawing near, put the blessed candle in his hand, adjust the crucifix so he can see it, if possible, sprinkle him and the room with holy water, and, kneeling down, begin the prayers of the dying. They can be found in most prayer books. If he cannot hold the candle, let some one hold it in his hands for him. Repeat to him, especially at the last moment, short invocations, such as, "Jesus, Mary, Joseph," "My Jesus, Mercy," "Lord, into thy hands I commend my spirit," etc. If the agony last long, repeat the prayers of the dying or say the Rosary. Watch and pray until the end.

EXTREME UNCTION.

Extreme Unction is the Sacrament of the dying. It is administered to those who are in danger of death from sickness, a wound or an accident. It remits sin, cleanses the soul from the remains of sin, and gives strength to the soul in that last hour when the faculties have become extremely weak, and human nature has lost its power to resist. Should God see fit, it may be instrumental in restoring the sick to health.

Persons dangerously ill are obliged to be anointed if there is any possibility of getting a priest. They should not delay too long in sending for one, for they may lose the use of reason, or the severity of their sickness may prevent them from making a good confession or receiving the Viaticum with proper dispositions. As soon as there is evidence of a reasonable danger of death the priest should be sent for at once. The sick person is not always competent to pass judgment upon his condition. A Catholic doctor or nurse or friends or relatives are the best judges. Extreme Unction must be administered by the pastor or one of the assistant pastors of the parish in which the sick person lives, except in case of necessity or when permission has been granted.

It frequently happens that, aside from the supernatural strength imparted to the soul by this Sacrament, the natural results accruing from its reception are very great. It brings composure of mind and easiness of conscience, and a will to accept the inevitable, which are very helpful in sickness.

THE VIATICUM.

The Viaticum is Holy Communion given to the dying. It is given just as Holy Communion is given, except that the priest in administering it uses slightly different words. Everything in the sick room should be prepared just as for Holy Communion. The sick person, before receiving, should have gone to confession, or at least should be in a state of grace.

It is not necessary to be fasting to receive the Viaticum worthily. If the patient can just as well fast, it is advisable to do so, but there is no obligation whatever in that regard. The Church permits this on account of it being so difficult for the sick and dying to fast, and on account of the vast number who otherwise would die without the graces and comforts of that divine Sacrament.

Holy Viaticum is administered only to those who are in danger of death, and who in other respects are in a fit condition to receive it. They cannot receive it if they are unable to swallow the Sacred Host, or if they are vomiting.

No matter how sick a person is, if there is no reasonable danger of death, the Viaticum cannot be administered. Who is the judge as to the reality of the danger? The priest is the judge. If he is in doubt, he may consult the attending physician, but it is not necessary to have expert medical advice.

It is a great injustice to the sick to delay too long to call the priest, for there is always a possibility of the patient lapsing into unconsciousness, or of becoming so distressed and weakened in mind as not to fully realize the meaning of the Holy Sacrament he is receiving.

Holy Viaticum may be received more than once during the same sickness, but usually not oftener than once a week, although there may be circumstances in which it can be administered daily. It is understood, however, that the dangerous character of the sickness still continues.

Viaticum means literally something to support,

assist, or comfort on a journey. The dying soul is about to start on a long journey. It is going to its everlasting home. It must pass through the narrow gate of death and on into eternity. There are dangers in the moment of death beyond what any one can easily imagine. At no time in life is the soul tried so severely as in the instant of parting. A hard and long journey is death to the poor soul, and Christ Jesus in His love and mercy wants to be near us at that time. He wants to be with us and not to leave us till we have safely reached home. He wants to take us by the hand and lead us home, and hence He seeks us out and comes to us in our dying moments in the Holy Viaticum.

THE LAST BLESSING.

A last blessing to which is attached a plenary indulgence is given to those who are about to die. The priest has the power to give such a solemn blessing, and grant to those who have the proper dispositions a full discharge of all temporal punishment due their sins, as the hour of death approaches. It is generally given with the last sacraments.

In order to gain this indulgence the dying person must, first, be in a state of grace (free from all mortal sin), and for this purpose should go to confession and receive the Blessed Sacrament if he possibly can; secondly, he must have the intention of receiving it, if not an actual intention at least a general or implied intention; thirdly, he must be sorry for all of his sins,

venial as well as mortal; fourthly, he must invoke the name of Jesus, if not orally at least in his mind; fifthly, he must be resigned to God's will, even if he should be taken away by death. These conditions have reference to a person having the use of his reasoning faculties. If for any cause he is not in the possession of his senses, he must at least be in a state of grace.

The dying should, therefore, endeavor to have lively sentiments of faith, hope and charity,—believing all the truths the Church believes and teaches, trusting in the great mercy of God and the boundless compassion of Jesus Christ, loving God above all things, forgiving everyone and asking forgiveness at least mentally. He should be sorry for his sins, and resolve that in case God gives him back his health and strength, he will be more careful to avoid sin and more diligent in keeping God's commandments. Lastly, he should offer up his sufferings in union with the passion and death of our Lord, and accept God's will if He should see fit to take him away by death.

How happy is the Christian thus dying! The Church stands by his side in the last trying hour; she blesses him with a solemn blessing and grants him, if he has the right disposition, a full pardon of all the temporal punishment due the divine justice for his past offenses as he is about to step into eternity. Should he gain this indulgence as he passes into the presence of God, he would be immediately numbered among the saints.

PENANCE.

Penance is the Sacrament in which the sins committed after Baptism are forgiven. Penance consists of contrition, confession and satisfaction. Contrition is sorrow for sin and a firm resolve to sin no more; confession is telling our sins to a duly authorized priest for the purpose of obtaining forgiveness; and satisfaction is satisfying the divine justice for sins committed. The one, therefore, who receives this Sacrament worthily must make an earnest effort to find out his sins; must be sorry for them and make up his mind not to commit them again; must confess them to the priest and perform the penance which he imposes. This penance should be performed faithfully and as soon as possible.

The power of forgiving sins was given by our Lord to the priests of His Church when He spoke these memorable words: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost, whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained." It is evident that our Lord here instituted Penance in the form of a judicial tribunal. The priest is a judge who hears the offense (for this reason he must know the sin, hence the necessity of confessing it), passes judgment by forgiving or not, imposes a punishment, and prescribes a remedy. The penitent is the accuser of self and the advocate of his own cause. He should abide by the sentence, as all Catholics do.

THE EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE.

To examine is to search into, investigate or find out. To examine the conscience is to search into its hidden recesses and thus find out or recall the sins we have committed since our last confession. It is absolutely essential for a good confession to know our mortal sins, to determine the number of times each was committed, and to understand the circumstances that may change their nature. In beginning the examination we should pray to God for light to know our sins and for grace to be sorry for them. God will help us.

How long we should spend in the examination of conscience depends upon the time since our last confession, our state of life, the moral condition of the soul and the degree of fervor manifested in the practice of our religion. Those who confess frequently or have a delicate conscience need take but a short time as they are not likely to overlook any mortal offense. Scrupulous persons must obey their confessor and abide absolutely by his advice. They should submit to his decisions with absolute obedience.

Those who confess once a year or not so frequently, and who are largely engaged in the affairs of the world, possibly sunk in sin, thinking little of breaking the laws of God, should be very careful. They should begin to reflect upon the past a day or two before confession, and should carefully read the examination of conscience found in the prayer book. Then they should excite themselves to true sorrow and be firm in the resolve to avoid sin in the future.

A good confession largely depends upon a good examination of conscience.

CONFESSION.

Confession is a part of the Sacrament of Penance. It is telling our sins to a priest for the purpose of obtaining forgiveness.

Those who have never made a confession undoubtedly think it must be a hard thing to do and very repugnant to their feelings; but it is not. Catholics do not think it is a hard thing to do. The Church has taken every precaution to allay any feeling of aversion on the part of those who confess. She has been exceedingly strict in her legislation on this subject. The confession is absolutely private. The secrecy of the confessional is inviolable—so inviolable that the confessor would willingly suffer the severest penalties, the worst forms of punishment and even death rather than reveal it. Besides, the priest is used to hearing confessions of all classes. Moreover, people are entirely free to select any confessor they may choose. These things should rob the confessional of its supposed terrors.

Certain things are absolutely necessary for a good and valid confession. The first is, we must make an earnest, reasonable effort to examine our conscience. (See separate article on this subject.) The second is, we must have sorrow for our sins, otherwise they cannot be forgiven. God cannot forgive a sin we are not sorry for. We should endeavor, therefore, to have sor-

row for our sins. There are many reasons why we should be sorry for them. In the first place they are most offensive to the love and goodness of God. If either the love or goodness of God should be the motive of our sorrow, it would be perfect sorrow, and would cause God to remit our sins without confession, provided we could not make a confession and provided, also, we had the intention of going to confession as soon as an opportunity would present itself. Another reason for sorrow for sin is the fear of God's judgments. This is called imperfect sorrow, and is not remissive of sin except through confession. Either is sufficient with confession.

The third condition for a good confession is that it must be humble, sincere, truthful and entire. It is entire when we tell all the mortal or grievous sins we have committed since our last confession, and the circumstances, if any, that might change their nature.

There is a law of the Church to the effect that Catholics must under pain of grievous sin go to confession once a year. But to go weekly or monthly is an excellent practice, and productive of great spiritual results. Those who cannot make their confession that often should endeavor to go every three or four months. There is, however, a moral obligation of going to confession as soon as possible after committing a mortal sin, and the one who does not do it is trifling with his salvation. Death may take him away with that mortal sin upon his soul.

Children who have not made their first Communion and who have attained the use of reason should, accord-

ing to the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore, go to confession four times a year, that is, during each of the four ember weeks which are the weeks in which the ember days occur. Parents should interest themselves in seeing that their children comply with this regulation.

MANNER OF MAKING A CONFESSION.

When you go to the confessional do not press before others. While you are waiting for your turn, do not distract yourself or others by looking around or talking, but make preparation for a good confession by examining your conscience and praying to God for forgiveness. You should first pray to God that He may enable you to know your sins and give you grace to be sorry for them. After the examination of conscience, if you have long to wait, read that which relates to confession in your prayer book, or recite the Rosary, or meditate on some spiritual subject.

Do not place yourself so near the confessional as to hear the confessions of others. If by accident you do hear what others are saying in the confessional, you are bound under the pain of sin to keep it a secret. Anyone who listens with the intention of hearing is guilty of sin.

Before entering the confessional you can say the Confiteor as far as "through my most grievous fault," and when you come out, you can say the rest of the Confiteor.

When you go into the confessional, kneel down,

bless yourself and say: "Bless me, Father, for I have sinned." Do not wait for the priest to begin, but begin yourself by telling him how long it has been since your last confession, if you received absolution, performed your penance, and received Holy Communion. Then go on and in a straightforward, sincere, truthful manner tell him all the sins you have committed since your last confession. Be very modest in word and manner, but make your sins perfectly clear. Do not whittle them away to nothing, nor make them bigger than they are, but in a simple, childlike manner, and in your own words, no matter how inelegant they may be, tell them just as you sincerely think they are. Do not speak so loud that others may hear, nor yet so low that the priest cannot understand. If you do not understand him, tell him so at once.

Be sure to mention the number of times you have committed a sin, if it be mortal. To try to find out the number of times you have committed a sin is a part of the examination of conscience. If you cannot remember the exact number, you can state the number as near as you can. If it is quite a while since your last confession, it will simplify things to make known the number of times a sin is committed in a day, or a week, or a month. Do not say "several times," "a good many times," "a few times," etc. When you confess that way the priest has to stop you and ask questions which could be avoided.

For those who go to confession frequently it is a good custom to include some sin formerly confessed, for which you have great sorrow, such as untruthful-

ness, dishonesty, missing Mass and the like. If some such sin be not included, the confessor may be obliged to request you to do so before he can give you absolution, in as much as he may think there is not sufficient matter to justify absolution being given.

After you have told all your mortal sins and such of the venial sins as you wish to mention—and it is well to tell all—conclude your confession by saying: “For these and all my other sins I am heartily sorry, and I beg pardon of God and absolution of you, Father.” Listen with attention to what the confessor says to you, remember the penance, and when you think he is about to give you absolution begin the act of contrition.

Never speak to another about what has been told you in the confessional. It may be sinful, or at least it does not look well. The instruction, advice, encouragement and warning there given are for you and for you alone. They are for nobody else.

INDULGENCES.

In order to understand the meaning of an indulgence, it is necessary to bear in mind that there are two bitter fruits produced by sin, namely, the guilt which deprives the soul of the grace and friendship of God, and a penalty which signifies some sort of punishment. There are the guilt of sin and the penalty due it. The latter or penalty may be eternal or temporal. Now, the guilt of sin and the eternal penalty or punishment are forgiven in the Sacrament of Penance, but the Sacra-

ment does not always remit all the temporal punishment.

Very much likely remains to be discharged either in this life by means of good works, penances or virtuous acts, or else in the next life in Purgatory. Taking the world as it is, prone to so much evil, disinclined to works of penance or mortification, careless about its religious duties, and steeped in so much sin, vice and crime, it is almost certain that the divine justice will require much punishment to be meted out in Purgatory, whence the soul shall not depart until the last farthing is paid.

It is here where the indulgence granted by the Church is applicable. It is a remission of the whole or a part of the temporal punishment due to our misdeeds. If all of it is remitted, the indulgence is called plenary; if only a part is remitted, the indulgence is called partial.

A plenary indulgence is, therefore, a remission of the whole of the temporal punishment due to sin. So that theologians teach us, that were we to die immediately after gaining a plenary indulgence, we should go straight to Heaven. The same may be said of the souls in Purgatory, whenever in suffrage for them we gain a plenary indulgence applicable to them, provided the divine justice deigns to accept it in their behalf.

A partial indulgence is a remission of only a part of the temporal punishment due to sin. Partial indulgences are designated by days, quarantines and years. A quarantine means a Lent or forty days. Thus we receive an indulgence of so many days, quarantines or

years. The meaning is not that our confinement in Purgatory would be less that number of days or years, but it means that so much temporal punishment is remitted as would be remitted by a penance in the primitive Church continuing for so many days and years. How long that would be in Purgatory we do not know.

Why can the Church grant an indulgence? Because the infinite merits and satisfaction of Christ, and the super-abundant merits of the Blessed Virgin and the Saints form an infinite treasure of merits and satisfaction, and the Church holds the keys to this heavenly treasure and can dispense its stores to the faithful. "I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of Heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in Heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose upon earth, it shall be loosed also in Heaven." (Math. 16-19.) This doctrine is expressed by the following words of Clement VI: "Jesus Christ did by His super-abundant holy passion bequeath to His Church militant here on earth an infinite treasure, not laid up in a napkin, nor hidden in a field, but committed by Him to be dispensed for the welfare of the faithful by the hands of blessed Peter, who has the keys of Heaven, and by his successors here on earth, the vicars of Jesus Christ. In this treasure are amassed also all the merits of the Blessed Mother of God, and of all the elect from the first just man even to the last."

CONDITIONS NECESSARY TO GAIN INDULGENCES.

Certain conditions are always necessary to gain an indulgence. First, the soul must be in a state of grace, that is, free from mortal sin. The soul in a state of mortal guilt is incapable of receiving an indulgence of any kind. Besides, the temporal punishment or penalty cannot be remitted until the guilt is first forgiven. Secondly, it is necessary to have an intention of receiving the indulgence, at least a general or implied one. It would be well to form such an intention daily by adding to your morning prayers words to this effect: "I desire to gain all indulgences to-day." These words, or even the mental formation of the thought they express, would be sufficient. If you desire to apply the indulgence to the souls in Purgatory, a special intention is necessary. Thirdly, the Church has always enjoined certain good works, and these must be faithfully performed in person and according to time, manner and circumstances specified. If they are not done, or a notable part omitted, the indulgence is not gained, except in cases where they are changed by lawful superiors or confessors into some other works. It is well to carefully note in the prayer book, or in the document announcing the indulgence, the works mentioned.

The above conditions are necessary to secure any indulgence, whether plenary or partial. But to gain a plenary indulgence, confession, Communion and prayers for the intention of the Holy Father are usually required in addition to the above conditions, and some-

times a visit to a church or public oratory is necessary. Bear in mind that these works are not usually required for a partial indulgence, but the words, "with at least a contrite heart," are generally employed, which mean that if anyone in a state of mortal sin wishes to gain the indulgence in question, he must at least make an act of perfect contrition with a firm purpose of going to confession.

Those who are accustomed to go to confession weekly, if not lawfully prevented, may gain all indulgences attached to their good actions during the week, even though confession is mentioned as a condition, provided they are not conscious of mortal sin, and provided, also, the indulgence is not granted in the form of a Jubilee. Confession alone, or confession and Communion, may be made on the day before the indulgence is granted. The same Communion will suffice for more than one plenary indulgence granted on the same day, provided the other works are performed.

The Holy Father grants to all those who, being in a state of grace and having the right intention, are accustomed to receive Communion daily, even though they miss once or twice a week, the indulgences without the weekly confession, which in other circumstances is still of obligation for rightly gaining the indulgences that occur during the week.

A visitation to a church is not usually prescribed, but in case it is, you are at liberty to select any church or public oratory, unless a particular one is mentioned. The prayers for the intention of the Holy Father are

left entirely to the people's choice. Five Our Fathers and Hail Marys are considered sufficient.

The most important condition for gaining a plenary indulgence is to have a true sorrow and hatred for all our sins, venial as well as mortal, and there must be no attachment to them nor affection for them, otherwise an indulgence in all fullness cannot be gained. God cannot remit all punishment while we love a single sinful deed. "It is certain," says St. Alphonsus, "that so long as the guilt of venial sin is not remitted, the punishment due to it cannot be remitted."

Confessors can, as a rule, change the Communion and the visitation to a church into some other pious works in the case of those, who on account of chronic illness or permanent physical inability, cannot leave their homes.

HOW BLESSED ARTICLES LOSE THEIR INDULGENCES.

Blessed articles, which are commonly designated as movable and to which an indulgenced blessing is attached, such as rosaries, crucifixes, medals, statues or other articles generally carried about the person, lose the indulgences attached to them, first, by being destroyed either by wear, breakage, fire or any other cause; secondly, by losing the ownership of them through sale, purchase or by giving them away after becoming the owner, or in any other way.

In reference to the first, the article must remain the same, if not physically at least morally. Hence it must

be wholly destroyed beyond repair to forfeit the indulgence. If it is only slightly damaged and the damage repaired, the indulgence remains. Medals, crucifixes, etc., may be said to be wholly destroyed if they become so worn or disfigured as to become unrecognizable, especially the face of our Lord. The indulgence is attached to the "corpus" or body of the crucifix and consequently the body may be transferred to another cross. Statues, when slightly damaged and repaired, do not lose the indulgenced blessing. If the chain of a rosary be broken and mended again, or if a few of the beads are lost, or if the beads are re-strung on another chain, the indulgences remain. The idea is that the article after being repaired is the same article.

In reference to forfeiting the indulgenced blessing through losing ownership of an article, this principle is to be followed, namely, the indulgence is attached to the article but intended for one certain person. The application of this rule is very strict in order to prevent the least appearance of simony or traffic in sacred things. Hence, if you lose ownership of an article either by selling it or giving it away, or even losing it beyond recovery, the indulgences cease. After you become the owner of such an article, you are not allowed to give it at cost price, nor to accept what would cover necessary expenses, nor as a gift, nor as a charitable donation, nor in exchange for something else. Religious articles are bought or sold before being blessed, and blessed afterwards.

It is allowable, however, to give a rosary beads to another merely as an accommodation to count the

prayers, but not to gain the indulgences. If it is for the purpose of giving him the indulgences, the rosary ceases to be indulgenced. Rosary beads that are found must be re-blessed. It is also permitted for priests or people to give away indulgenced articles, for instance a rosary or such like, provided they are not blessed for their own personal use and as a matter of fact they have not used them. For instance, a person may get a number of articles blessed, not with the intention of using them himself, but with the intention of giving them to others. He can do this, and the one to whom he gratuitously gives them and who uses them for the first time is considered the owner and gains the indulgences. This is frequently done by people who go to Rome or other holy places and bring back many articles for their friends, and although the indulgence is attached to the article it is intended for one person who is to become the owner and who uses it for the first time.

RESTITUTION.

Justice demands that ill-gotten goods or their value be restored, if it be possible to do so. It is well to bear in mind that sins against strict justice cannot be forgiven until restitution is made, if it can be made, and if it cannot be made in fact, there must at least be an ardent desire to make it. If the theft or appropriation of goods or money be large enough to constitute a grave offense against strict justice, the obligation to restore binds under the pain of mortal sin; if it is slight and

constitutes merely a venial sin, the obligation to restore binds only under the pain of venial sin. That is the plain teaching of the Church, and the world would be more honest if all would heed her. Restitution can be made secretly. No one is obliged to proclaim himself a thief or to incriminate himself.

What constitutes a mortal offense against the law of strict justice? Theologians do not agree on this point, but they are sufficiently in accord for all practical purposes. The standard of values varies in different countries and under different circumstances. Conditions in life, too, have to be taken into consideration. What would apply, therefore, in one case, may not apply in another. Four theologians have written specially for America and they are considered of the highest authority. These are Kenrick, Sabetti, Tanquerey and Konings.

Kenrick holds that twenty-five cents unjustly taken from a laborer, fifty cents from a mechanic, one dollar from an ordinarily rich man, and five dollars in all cases constitute a mortal offense or a grave infraction of justice. Konings is not so severe. He holds that one dollar from a laborer, one dollar and twenty-five cents from a mechanic, two dollars from the one who lives on an income, and ten dollars in all cases are sufficient to make a mortal sin. Sabetti and Tanquerey are about midway between these two and are probably the safest to follow in practice. Speaking generally and in ordinary cases, it is commonly considered that to unjustly take one dollar constitutes a mortal sin,

though there may be exceptional circumstances where this rule would not hold good.

It should be borne in mind that, as far as restitution is concerned, when there is an infraction of strict justice, there is no difference between an individual and what are commonly understood as moral persons, such as corporations, firms, stores, companies, civic bodies, etc. He who unjustly takes from them is obliged, if possible, to make good the loss. But so many things have to be taken into account, that it is always best to consult your confessor.

A CASE OF RESTITUTION.

There is a very striking case of restitution narrated in the Gospels. It is that of Zacheus, a tax collector. He lived in the time of Christ and was considered to be a bad, dishonest man. By his alleged dishonest methods of collecting taxes levied by Rome, he had become exceedingly wealthy.

He heard of Jesus and was anxious to meet Him. On one occasion he tried to get near Him, but there were so many people around Him that he did not succeed. He ran ahead of the crowd and climbed into the branches of a sycamore tree that grew by the side of the road along which our Lord was to pass.

As our Savior approached, He raised His eyes towards the publican and exclaimed: "Zacheus, make haste and come down; for this day I must abide in thy house." The people murmured that he should receive such con-

sideration. But he came down, and then and there promised to give half of all he possessed to the poor, and, moreover, if he had wronged any man, to restore fourfold. For every dollar he had unjustly taken he would give back four!

What did Christ say to this? Let no one forget His answer. He said: "This day is salvation come to this house."

MATRIMONY.

Matrimony was instituted by God and raised to the dignity of a sacrament by our Lord. It unites Christian man and woman in lawful wedlock. God gives the parties thus united special grace to fulfill the various obligations and discharge the numerous duties which life imposes upon them.

The bond of Christian marriage is indissoluble, that is, it cannot be broken except by death. The words of St. Matthew, "What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder," refer to the bond of marriage. The Church can never, therefore, grant a divorce, and under no circumstances can permit a divorced person to marry again, provided the former marriage is good or valid. For certain grave reasons, the husband and the wife may be permitted to live separately, but they are always husband and wife, and never free to marry another until the other party dies.

A marriage can be contracted only in the absence of nullifying impediments which are obstacles standing in the way of its validity. There are a number of these

impediments. Marriage entered into with any of them present would be considered null and void by the Church, unless she dispenses with or removes them. To find out if they exist, as well as to publicly make known the solemnization of marriage, the banns are published at the principal Mass in the parish church for three successive Sundays or holy days of obligation.

The marriage ceremony should take place in the parish church before God's altar. It should also be performed at Mass, for it is only then that the nuptial blessing can be given. This cannot be imparted outside of Mass. When marriage is to take place, whether at Mass or not, the persons to be married should go to confession, and if possible receive Holy Communion on the day of their marriage, as Matrimony is a Sacrament that should be received in a state of grace. They may receive Holy Communion at the nuptial Mass, and in this case must be fasting.

The pastor should be given ample notice about marriages, at least three Sundays in advance, and no arrangements should be made nor invitations to the wedding sent out before he is seen. The day of marriage should not be spent in an unbecoming manner or in frivolous, not to say sinful, pleasures.

THE NEW MARRIAGE LAW.

There is a new decree in reference to Catholic marriages, which became effective on Easter, April 19, 1908.

According to this decree Catholics must be married

before the pastor or Bishop (Ordinary) of the place where the ceremony takes place, or by a priest authorized by either of them, and before at least two witnesses, otherwise the marriage is null and void. Catholics who are not married before the pastor or Bishop of the place where the ceremony takes place, or by a priest authorized by either of them and before at least two witnesses, after the above date, will be considered by the Church not married at all. This is true when both parties are Catholics, or only one of them is a Catholic; it is true also whether they are practical or fallen away Catholics. It binds those who were baptized in the Catholic Church or have become converts. The Church does not consider Protestant marriages null and void because not performed before a Catholic priest. It would seem unnecessary to mention this, but we have been accused of holding such views in the past, and hence liable to be accused of holding them in the future. The present decree has no reference to any but Catholic marriages, that is, where both parties, or one of the parties, are or have been Catholics.

Hence, Catholics, whether practical or fallen away, must be married before the pastor of the district or parish where the marriage takes place or the ordinary of the place or a priest authorized by either of them, and before at least two witnesses; otherwise it is invalid.

The new decree does not abrogate any of the usual impediments to marriage, except sponsalia (espousals), which to be valid as an impediment must be in writing, signed by the parties and by either the parish priest or the ordinary of the place, or by two witnesses. If one

or both the contracting parties cannot write, the fact is to be noted in the document and another witness is to be added. The other impediments remain.

There are two exceptions to the rule requiring Catholics to be married before the pastor or ordinary of the place or a priest delegated by either of them. The first is when there is imminent danger of death and urgent reasons exist for the celebration of the marriage, and the pastor or ordinary of the place or one delegated by either of them cannot be had in time. In such case the marriage may be celebrated validly and lawfully before any priest and two witnesses. The second is when the pastor or ordinary of the place, or one delegated by either of them, cannot be had for the space of a month; in such case marriage may be validly and lawfully entered into by the formal declaration of the parties before two witnesses.

What has thus far been written has reference to the validity of marriage. The decree contains certain regulations which make it licit. To understand them it is necessary to know the difference between validity and licitness. Validity affects the marriage contract; licitness only affects the manner in which the contract is made. When a marriage is invalid, there is no marriage at all; when it is illicit, marriage is there, but the parties are more or less at fault in not being married according to all the requirements of the law. Validity expresses what "must" be done; licitness expresses what "ought" to be done.

What are the requirements of the decree to make a marriage licit? To be married in their own church

before their own pastor or ordinary of the place, or a priest delegated by either of them. To belong to a parish, as far as marriage is concerned, a person must have a domicile in it or live in it for at least one month. Those who have no such domicile in any parish (vagi), cannot be married without the permission of the ordinary, provided there is no grave necessity. If one of the parties lives in one parish, and the other in another parish, the marriage should be celebrated in the parish of the bride, unless some just cause excuses from this.

A new feature of the decree requires marriage to be noted in the baptismal register. On this account the bride and groom should be able to state when and where they were baptized. They should be able to give the name and location of the church in which they were baptized. Such information can be given privately.

IMPEDIMENTS TO MARRIAGE.

An impediment, according to its common meaning, is that which impedes or obstructs. Applied to marriage, it is that which renders it invalid or illicit. There are two kinds of marriage impediments, namely, nullifying (called diriment) and prohibitive. The former, when existing at the time of marriage, make it null and void. The latter forbid a marriage to take place, but should it take place, it is valid.

The principal nullifying impediments are, 1. defective age; 2. physical unfitness; 3. previous valid marriage not dissolved by death; 4. affinity; 5. consanguin-

ity; 6. disparity of worship or marriage between a Catholic and a non-baptized person; 7. public honesty; 8. violence or compulsion; 9. certain crimes of married persons; 10. solemn vows; 11. orders; 12. clandestinity.

If any one of these impediments exists previous to marriage and has not been removed or dispensed with by proper ecclesiastical authority, such marriage is null and void. A "dispensation" is the act of dispensing with or removing the impediment. But we must bear in mind that one of these impediments is of divine origin, namely previous valid marriage not dissolved by death, and the Church cannot dispense with it. She cannot abrogate a positive law of God. Some are of natural origin, such as defective age or physical unfitness, and the Church cannot remove these either, for she cannot interfere with the operations of a natural law. She enforces divine and natural laws. Others are of purely ecclesiastical origin, such as disparity of worship and spiritual affinity, and these she can dispense with on the principle that the body or one who makes a law can repeal it or in particular cases suspend its operation. When any of these impediments exist previous to marriage and have not been removed, such marriage is null and void, even though a priest should perform the ceremony.

No priest will perform a marriage ceremony with any of them in the way, unless he has been deceived. The Church does not grant dispensations except for grave reasons.

The prohibitive impediments are, 1. mixed religion or marriage between a Catholic and a baptized non-

Catholic; 2. non-publication of the banns; 3. espousals when in writing and properly attested; 4. simple vows; 5. solemnization of marriage during forbidden times. These merely forbid a marriage, but should it take place with one or all of them existing, the Church regards it as valid, provided they are married within the Church according to the new marriage law. The parties, however, are guilty of a grievous offense. In case there are any so unfortunate as to get married outside of the Church, they should consult their confessor.

BANNS OF MARRIAGE.

The banns of marriage are a public proclamation that a certain marriage is about to take place. To make such a proclamation is an old law of the Church, and according to it the names of the persons to be joined in wedlock must be published or "called out" in their parish church at the principal or parochial Mass for three successive Sundays or holy days of obligation. The banns need not be published in the place of their nativity, but in the place where they live when getting married.

If one of the parties lives in one parish and the other in another, the banns should be published in both. If a notable period of time elapses, generally considered two or three months, from the time of the last proclamation to the time of the solemnization of the marriage, the banns should be published again.

The reason for this law is to guard against the

possibility of marriages taking place between those who, according to the rules of the Church, cannot be married. There are certain impediments which make a marriage null and void. The names of the parties are made known to the congregation or to those who are most likely to know if such impediments exist.

If any one knows of the existence of any impediment, it is his bounden duty to so inform the priest. He is under a serious obligation to make such knowledge known. The Church is very particular about the nuptial bond, and hence she takes every precaution in the matter. The greatest precaution is to proclaim their names publicly.

Besides, marriage is a ceremony that affects the public welfare. Being a contract, as well as a Sacrament, society at large has an interest in it, and should know when it is entered into and by whom. For this reason the state publishes the names of those who secure marriage licenses.

It is most necessary, therefore, to comply with the law, which requires the banns to be published to the congregation. Every pastor is under grave obligation to do so. They must not be dispensed with except for very serious and grave reasons. It is only when the publication of the banns in some manner reflects upon the character of the persons, or may do them a serious injury that the privilege of a dispensation from the law should be sought.

THE MARRIAGE CEREMONY.

The couple to be married should be in the church punctually at the appointed time and present themselves before the altar where the priest, dressed in surplice and stole, awaits them. There should be at least two witnesses to the ceremony. The bridegroom hands the priest his marriage license, if he has not already done so. This license must always be procured where the civil law requires it. The priest keeps it as he is obliged under penalty to certify to it and return it to the county court from which it was issued.

In beginning the ceremony the priest asks the bridegroom the following question: "N—— N—— wilt thou take N—— N—— here present for thy lawful wife according to the rite of our Holy Mother the Church?" He answers: "I will."

Then using her name first instead of his and substituting "lawful husband" for "lawful wife," he asks the bride the same question. She answers: "I will."

The priest then requests them to join their right hands and repeat after him each in turn, the bridegroom first, the following:

"I, N—— N——, take thee, N—— N——, for my lawful wife (or husband) to have and to hold from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, till death do us part."

After these words are spoken the priest declares them united in the bonds of Matrimony and sprinkles them with holy water. The bridegroom at once produces the wedding ring, which he gives to the priest, unless he

has already given it to him. As soon as it is blessed he returns it to the bridegroom with the request to put it on the bride's finger repeating these words:

"With this ring I thee wed and I plight unto thee my troth."

When the prayers prescribed by the Ritual are said the ceremony proper is ended. If marriage takes place at Mass, it begins at once. It is the desire of the Church that all marriages be so solemnized and the nuptial blessing given, provided it is not within the times forbidding such solemnization and provided the bride, if a widow, has not received the blessing in her former marriage. This blessing cannot be given outside of Mass.

The bride and bridegroom should remember that marriage is a Sacrament that must be received in the state of grace or free from mortal sin, and hence they should go to confession and if possible receive Holy Communion on the day of their marriage.

MIXED MARRIAGES.

There is a law forbidding Catholics to marry non-Catholics. When such marriages do take place, they are called "mixed," and the Church has always discouraged them. The reasons that cause her to take this stand are easy to see. No convictions are so strong as religious convictions; no prejudice is so hard to break down as religious prejudice. Both are hard to overcome and stubborn to handle. A difference of religion

is liable to lead to misunderstandings, loss of faith and the neglect of the children's moral training.

There should be no difference of opinion between man and wife in such an essential home influence as religion. It is not easy to underrate the importance of a factor that regulates their relations to God, and sets up a standard of proper conduct and correct living. When the father professes one form of religion and the mother another, both forms are liable to suffer. Just as soon as the question of religion comes between man and wife, a great wall is raised up between heart and heart, mind and mind, will and will. The little children are made to suffer in a way that tells upon their whole future. The question of religious training is not mentioned in the home. Probably they are baptized, possibly not. They are, in too many instances, not taught their prayers, nor required to go to church, nor encouraged to learn their Catechism, nor instructed in the rudiments of Christian doctrine. That is the way they lose their faith.

Hence the Church forbids such marriages, unless there are very grave and urgent reasons for permitting them, and then before a dispensation from the law is granted, the non-Catholic is obliged to sign an agreement that he or she shall not interfere in any way with the practice of the Catholic party's religion, and that all the children shall be raised in the Catholic faith, and that no other ceremony than that by the priest shall be performed.

Young people cannot be too careful in entering into a life-long alliance that at its best may be the cause of

unpleasantness, misunderstanding and possible loss of faith not only to themselves, but to those whom in the nature of things they must hold near and dear.

TIMES IN WHICH MARRIAGE IS FORBIDDEN.

There are certain times of the year during which it is forbidden to solemnize marriage. The restriction arises from a reverence for the sacredness of these seasons. These times are from the beginning of Advent till the feast of the Epiphany (January 6), and from the beginning of Lent till Low Sunday (the Sunday after Easter.) The rigidity of the enforcement of the regulation varies in different localities, but the Church only forbids the solemnization of the marriage ceremony, that is, the bestowal of the nuptial blessing with great pomp, display or festivities.

THE SACRAMENTALS.

Catholics make use of certain things which are blessed or set aside by the Church for the purpose of exciting good thoughts and creating pious dispositions. These are the sacramentals. Through the virtuous sentiments aroused by them in the heart and soul, venial sins are remitted and our spiritual good advanced. They may also avail for our temporal welfare.

They are classified under different headings, such as rites and ceremonies connected with the administration of the Sacraments; benedictions and exorcisms not

in connection with the Sacraments; things which are sacred either by divine origin or through the various blessings of the Church; and lastly, certain pious works and exercises. It is not our intention to enumerate them all here, but only those which are in most common use among Catholics. We may mention the sign of the cross, holy water, blessed candles, blessed palm, blessed ashes, rosary beads, scapulars, crucifixes, agnus deis, images of our Lord and the saints, many prayers and all blessings or benedictions of whatsoever kind.

It must be borne in mind that there is a vast difference between them and the Sacraments. The Sacraments were instituted by Christ, and infallibly give grace if there be no obstacle in the way; the sacramentals were instituted from time to time by the Church, and incline us to the practice of virtue by creating movements of the heart and dispositions of soul that are pleasing to God. In this manner they remit venial sins and contribute to the advancement of our spiritual and temporal well being. They do not possess any power in themselves. To hold that they do would be superstitious and idolatrous. They derive their efficacy from the prayers of the Church, and from the fact that the Church blesses them and sets them aside as instruments of creating good thoughts and virtuous dispositions. Material things are absolutely incapable of their own inherent power to give help to any one, except to satisfy natural wants, but they may be blessed or assigned by the Church to certain uses, and through that blessing and assignment they become instruments for good. Then they become sacred things and should be

regarded as such by the faithful. To show disrespect or contempt for them is to show disrespect and contempt for the Church which has authority from God to employ every legitimate means in her power to induce those under her care to lead good, holy lives.

THE BLESSINGS OF THE CHURCH.

The blessings of the Church have a deep meaning and are of great assistance in combating evil and promoting virtuous dispositions.

By the primal transgression the world passed under the sway of the evil spirit. God then cursed all material things. He made all things good in themselves, but, although remaining good in themselves, they were vitiated by the original fall and the spirit of evil makes use of them to carry on his own nefarious work for the destruction of souls. There can be no doubt that his trail is upon the earth, and all things, man included, feel the effects of his power. His temptations and allurements meet us at every turn.

The motive governing the Church in her blessings is to curtail his influence, to render him powerless over persons and things, and to furnish means by which virtuous dispositions may be aroused in the soul. They certainly advance our spiritual and even temporal welfare. Some articles are set aside for special religious purposes, and these she orders to be blessed or consecrated before using. In other cases she ardently desires the faithful to ask her benediction either for articles

they use or objects they are interested in, or persons in unusual circumstances.

There are a large number of these blessings, and all of them are sacramentals. It would be impossible to specify them here in detail, but we may mention that there are more than one hundred different forms. They include blessings for articles to be used in the Church or privately at home; for the temples in which we worship and the houses in which we dwell; for the fruits of the earth and the food we eat; for persons in various states and conditions of life and for the ground wherein the dead are laid to rest; for the beasts of the field and many inanimate objects of nature; to guard against danger, pestilence and plague, and to render our surroundings powerless for evil. There is a formula entitled "ad omnia," which means all other things not having a special formula. Evidently the condition is understood that they be used for good purposes.

This shows the wide range of their application, and reveals the mind of the Church in reference to their beneficial results.

All articles specially blessed should be looked upon as sacred. They should not be misused, nor thrown around, nor regarded with indifference, not to say contempt. It does not look well to see them cast anywhere about the house in the most unbecoming places. When, for any cause, they are no longer of use, they should be burned or buried in a place where they will not be disturbed. Never throw a blessed article out. **Burn or bury it.**

THE SIGN OF THE CROSS.

The Cross is the sacred emblem of Christianity. It is not only emblematic of the religion practiced by Christians, but it puts them in mind of the incarnation, passion and death of their Lord, and is an open profession of their belief in the Holy Trinity.

This sacred sign has become so common that it is a distinctive mark of objects purely Catholic. It is used by the Church in all her blessings, ceremonies and religious functions, and she encourages the faithful to frequently make it on themselves.

In making it on ourselves, it should be made properly. To make it properly, raise the right hand to the forehead, then lower it to the breast, then bring it to the left shoulder, then to the right, saying at the same time: "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

Too many make it so imperfectly and with so much carelessness as to suggest irreverence. An indulgence of fifty days may be gained by those who make it with a contrite heart and distinctly pronounce the words.

We should make it on ourselves before and after prayer, and sometimes during prayer, before and after meals, going into and leaving a church, upon retiring at night and rising in the morning, in all trials, temptations, troubles and afflictions.

HOLY WATER.

Holy water is water that has been blessed. Its origin dates back to the earliest times, and its use has

become universal in the Catholic world. To such an extent is this true, that the Church makes use of it in all ceremonies, blessings and functions of religion, as well as in the administration of many of the Sacraments. The people are advised to keep it in their homes, and sprinkle themselves with it on various occasions, and also to sprinkle their houses with it.

The spiritual benefits resulting from it are most salutary. It is a safeguard against the attacks of the evil spirit and commands him to depart; it invites the presence of the Holy Spirit at all times; and it brings health to the soul and body. Faith teaches us that Satan goes about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. He stands in the way to what is holiest and best, and tries to deflect souls from the path of virtue into the ways of sin and wickedness. This is true at all times, but especially at the hour of death. Holy water is intended to stay him in such work, and to secure the assistance of God's grace. In common with all the sacramentals, it may cause the remission of venial sin.

Hence the laudable practice of using it on certain occasions. The principal of these occasions for people generally are, when coming into and leaving a church when retiring at night and arising in the morning, when afflicted with trouble, surrounded by danger or beset with temptation.

Holy water should always be in Catholic homes. It should be kept in a small vial or bottle. It is better to have one specially for the purpose. They are for sale at any Catholic store. Small fonts should be placed

near the door of bed rooms so as to be convenient to take the water upon retiring and rising.

Holy water should not be kept too long without renewal, for it will become corrupt. It should be used for sprinkling purposes only. It should never be swallowed or drank. That is not the purpose in view in blessing it.

Those who use it with reverence and faith according to the intention of the Church will certainly be spiritually benefitted thereby.

Pope Pius IX granted to all the faithful an indulgence of one hundred days every time they make, with a contrite heart, the sign of the cross with holy water, pronouncing at the same time the words: "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

BLESSED CANDLES.

Light is always used in the celebration of the sacred mysteries. It dispels darkness and is symbolical of God who dwells in light inaccessible. St. John says that God is clothed with light as with a garment. Light is, therefore, most appropriate in celebrating the mysteries of religion.

In this connection the candle is the light of the Church. It must be made of beeswax. No other material has ever been allowed, except in a few very rare cases.

There is a special day on which candles are blessed for the whole year. That day is the feast of the Purifi-

cation of the Blessed Virgin which is held on the second of February. The establishment of the feast of the Purification is a matter of discussion, but there can be little doubt that the blessing of candles in connection with it is on account of its taking the place of certain pagan festivities in Rome at which lights and torches were carried through the streets. The Popes wished to do away with these festivities and ordered that lights be used in connection with the purification of the Mother of God, hence candles are always blessed on that day, though they may be blessed at other times, if it be found necessary to do so. It is customary for the people to make an offering of candles to the church on that occasion, and after they are blessed, to take one or two home with them. They will be needed in case the Sacraments are administered in the house, that is, Communion or Extreme Unction. They will also be needed in case of death. In times of danger they may be lit. A pair of candlesticks should be provided and kept, together with the candles, in a convenient place where they can be readily found.

BLESSED ASHES.

Ashes are a sign of repentance and humiliation. They have been used in nearly all ages as an outward manifestation of true humility of heart and sorrow for sin.

The custom of sprinkling them on the heads or foreheads of the people at the beginning of Lent is indicative of the nature of the penitential season.

In the early centuries they were given only to public penitents who were driven out of the Church on account of their sins. They presented themselves at the church door at the beginning of the Lenten season with a view of being taken back on Holy Thursday. But in course of time others who were not public penitents stood with them and received the ashes through a spirit of humility and self-denial, and as their number gradually increased the rule of sprinkling all with ashes became customary.

The ashes are blessed immediately before the Mass said on the first day of Lent, and are distributed to the people in attendance. As the first day of Lent always falls on Wednesday, the blessing and distribution of the ashes have given it the name of Ash-Wednesday.

When received with the proper spirit, they are wonderful means of reminding us of our last end and the necessity of being humble and penitent in the sight of God. Every one, therefore, should be present on Ash-Wednesday either at the morning or evening service to receive them, though the obligation to do so does not bind under the pain of sin. To receive the ashes, go up to the altar railing devoutly and slowly with hands joined. As the priest places the ashes on your forehead in the form of a cross, he says: "Remember, man, that thou art dust, and unto dust thou shalt return." We have to be reminded again and again of this great truth.

Do not brush the ashes off unless they are very noticeable or uncomfortable. To carry them home either

for the sick or those who cannot come to the church or for any other purpose is forbidden.

BLESSED PALM.

The blessing and distribution of palm are a beautiful and significant ceremony. It takes place on Palm Sunday, the Sunday immediately preceding the death of our Lord, and is commemorative of His triumphant entry into Jerusalem. On that occasion, the people took palm leaves and branches of trees and strewed them before Him, while they shouted: "Hosannah, blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord."

Palm is the emblem of victory. It has been used in this sense from time immemorial. But the Christian's victory is through the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus. The blessed palm not only commemorates the memorable entry of our Lord into the city which He loved so much, but it reminds us of the final victory we must secure over sin and death. It has, therefore, a deep meaning.

Try to be present at the blessing and distribution of the palm. Receive it with reverence and devotion. If the people march in procession, it should be borne in the hand. It should also be borne in the hand at the gospel of the Mass at which it is distributed.

It should be taken home and put in a becoming place. It is well to put it in the bed room or near a crucifix. It should be burned previous to receiving new palm.

EASTER WATER.

During the last three days of holy week the ordinary holy water is taken from all the fonts in the church. They are filled again on Holy Saturday with what is called "Easter water." Baptismal water is blessed at the services held on Holy Saturday, and before the oils are put into it, a portion is kept out. This portion is the Easter water. The congregation are sprinkled with it, the fonts at the church doors are filled, and the people are advised to bring some of it home, and sprinkle their houses and the sick with it.

It should be borne in mind that in taking this water home a small bottle holding about two or three ounces is amply sufficient. A regular holy water bottle should be used for this purpose. Every Catholic family should have one, and keep it in a becoming and convenient place.

As the Liturgy of the Church is silent in reference to its use except on Holy Saturday and Easter Sunday, we may infer that it is not to be used at other times. Hence there is no necessity for taking away a large amount of it, or of preserving it for any length of time.

To bless water specially for Easter is a significant custom and one well calculated to harmonize with the spirit of that time. Every thing speaks of a renewal, of purification, of a cleansing from sin. The practices of the Church at this season of the year, among which the use of Easter water has a place, tend to bring about these results.

AGNUS DEI.

The words "Agnus Dei" mean Lamb of God. As known to Catholics, an Agnus Dei is a piece of blessed wax enclosed in a silken cover and worn about the person.

This wax is blessed by the Pope the first year of his pontificate and every seventh year after. It is blessed on the Wednesday of Easter week. It is distributed to the cardinals, bishops and prothonotaries on the Saturday after being blessed, and through them finds its way throughout the Catholic world. It is called "Agnus Dei," that is, Lamb of God, because when the wax is blessed it is shaped in the image of a lamb.

The Agnus Dei must not be looked upon as a charm or spell or anything that of itself can ward off evil or bring good. It is a symbol of the lamb-like qualities of our Lord. It derives its efficacy solely from the blessing imparted to it and from the fact that it reminds us of Him who was referred to by sacred writers as the Lamb of God.

There is no enrollment in it as is the case with the scapular. There is no indulgence attached to it; no prayer to be said under obligation; and no regulation as to the manner of wearing it. It may be suspended around the neck, or attached to the scapular, or carried about the person.

It should be considered a sacred thing, emblematic of our Lord. The wearer should endeavor to imitate His virtues, but especially His meekness and humility which were so pronounced that the prophet compared Him to a "lamb without voice before his shearer."

IMAGES, STATUES AND PICTURES.

Images, statues and pictures of our Lord and the saints have an important place in the Catholic religion. They are means of enkindling devotion and arousing pious dispositions. Our nature is so constituted that we need something of the kind to fix the attention, to inspire love, to recall old memories, and to represent realities in vivid forms.

We should remember, however, that they have no power of themselves to help us. To hold that they have would be superstitious and idolatrous. We do not pray to them; we always pray before them. Praying before a crucifix reminds us of the death of Christ, praying before a statue or picture of a saint reminds us of his glorious life and the virtues for which he was distinguished. Should they be blessed, there is an efficacy in that blessing. They are then set aside as instruments of good. Thus they become helps to religion and devotion.

There is nothing in the sacred Scriptures forbidding us to make or have around us either images, statues or pictures, except for the purpose of adoring or serving them as false gods. What appears to be a prohibition in the first commandment must be taken in this sense. It only forbids the making of them for the purpose of adoring or serving them. The prohibition is expressed in these words: "Thou shalt not make to thyself a graven thing nor the likeness of anything," but these words are qualified by "Thou shalt not adore them nor serve them." So there is nothing in the Scriptures for-

bidding them, while our nature seems to require them.

It is an excellent thing to have religious pictures in the home. They should be of such a kind as to represent saintly characters, noble ideals, religious truths and virtuous traits of conduct. As they are intended to inspire love and reverence, the subjects should be elevating and the workmanship of the very best. We have too many pictures of the chromatic type which generally find their way into the obscure corners of the home. It is true that we cannot always have recognized works of art, but we can secure very nice, artistic pictures of a religious character at little cost. Their influence can hardly be overestimated—especially on the young. The family may be scattered and the home destroyed, but the associations that cluster around them are imperishable. Every face and picture and room are hung securely on memory's wall and shall stay there throughout the vicissitudes of a lifetime.

DEDICATION AND CONSECRATION OF CHURCHES.

Churches are always blessed before being used as places of worship. If an edifice is to be occupied temporarily as a church, a simple blessing is given it. Any priest can perform this ceremony, but it should be done privately or with very little solemnity. When the edifice is to be used permanently as a church, a more solemn blessing is publicly given by the Bishop or by a priest duly delegated by him. The occasion calls for

much more elaborate ceremonies than when the building is to be used as a church only for a time. Most of our churches in this country belong to this class.





When an edifice is to be used permanently as a church and the circumstances are such that there is no probability of its being used for other purposes than divine worship, it may be dedicated by the most solemn rite of consecration. It should be built of durable material, such as brick or stone. Buildings constructed of wood or lumber cannot be consecrated. A consecrated church can never be diverted to profane or worldly use. The ceremony of consecration must be performed by the Bishop or by a priest specially delegated by the Supreme Pontiff. It implies a most solemn and public blessing. Holy oil and chrism are used, and the ceremonies are very elaborate. Twelve crosses are placed on the inside wall of the church about seven or eight feet from the floor. They may be painted on the wall or made of becoming material, such as marble or metal, and fastened to the wall. Two are placed near the altar, one on each side; two more are placed near the door, one on each side; and four on each side of the church. Over them is a bracket for a candle, which must be lit during the day of consecration and the anniversaries of consecration. Two crosses are also placed on the outside, near the main entrance, one on each side. They are usually carved on the door jamb or fastened to it. Indulgences may be gained under the usual conditions by visiting the church on the day of its consecration and on the anniversaries of its consecration.

The blessing and consecration of churches have a deep significance. They mark them as sacred places given over to the worship of God. How great should be the reverence for the house wherein the mysteries of religion are celebrated and sacrifice is offered to the Most High.

CROSSES AND CRUCIFIXES.

The cross and crucifix are sacred in the eyes of Catholics. They are thought by many to mean the same, but there is a great difference between them.

The cross is two beams placed transversely. It has no figure upon it, as is the case with the crucifix. There are many styles of these crosses, but it is our intention to enumerate only those in most common use. The ones most commonly known to us are the Latin, the Greek, the Maltese and the Iona.

The Latin cross, the one most universally seen, has the transverse beam near the top, thus ; the Greek cross has the transverse beam in the middle, thus ; the Maltese cross, which is the most ornamental, is formed by four triangles, whose apices meet in a common centre, thus ; the cross of Iona has a circle around the transverse beam, thus .

A crucifix (from *crux*, a cross, and *figere*, to fasten) is a cross with the image of Christ crucified upon it. The image is called the "corpus" or body. As indulgences are attached to the corpus, it may be transferred to another cross without losing the indulgences.

HOLY RELICS.

A holy relic is something that belonged to, or had a connection with, our Lord or any of the saints. Three kinds of relics are recognized. The first is any part of a saint's body. This is a relic in the strictest sense of the word, and is considered to possess in itself a degree of holiness, because it was a part of a saintly person. The second kind is anything that belonged to him, such as his clothing, books, rosary, etc., and although these objects are of much less value than the former, they should be esteemed holy not in themselves, but on account of their connection with a saintly person. The third kind is anything that had merely touched any part of the saint's body, such as a piece of cloth that had come in contact with the bones of a saint or martyr. This is a relic in a much broader sense than the two former.

Relics of the latter class are quite common, because it is not difficult to secure them. While relics of the first and second class are not rare, it is hard to secure them on account of the great care the Church exercises in preserving such sacred objects.

In reference to the manner in which holy relics are to be held and regarded by Catholics, the Council of Trent says: "The sacred bodies of the martyrs and other saints, which were the living members of Christ, the temples of the Holy Ghost, and are to be raised up by Him to eternal life, and glorified, are to be held in veneration by the faithful; by them many benefits are bestowed by God on men." The veneration due to the

bodies of the saints of God is founded, therefore, on the fact that they were living members of Christ's mystical body, tabernacles of sanctifying grace, and temples of the Holy Spirit, and will be glorified and united to the soul in the Kingdom of the just.

SPECIAL DEVOTIONS.

In the Catholic Church there is a great variety of devotions suitable to the various dispositions and needs of the multitudes of her children. These devotions are so many paths or ways by which we may approach God, the fountain of all grace and mercy. They are most excellent means for the acquisition of holiness and sanctity.

Among those most commonly practiced and from which great good is derived we may mention the devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the Holy Ghost, the Blessed Virgin, St. Joseph, St. Ann, St. Anthony, the Holy Angels, our guardian angel, the souls in Purgatory, and our patron saint. We should remember, however, that devotion to the saints and angels is subordinate to that rendered to any of the three divine Persons. All true devotion is centered in Jesus Christ, and, therefore, that which refers to Him or His sacred humanity is the most excellent. For this reason the first two here mentioned rank above all others in as much as they refer directly to our Lord.

Most good Catholics have some special or particular devotion which they love to practice and to which they

always turn for special favors or in moments of trouble, danger or temptation. That devotion becomes to them a never failing source of help. Every Catholic should have such a devotion. It will give him great assistance, will impart confidence and courage, and will help to keep alive a truly religious spirit.

We should remember, however, that these special devotions are something over and above our religious duties. Their practice cannot be used as an excuse for not fulfilling the plain obligations of religion or keeping the commandments of God or the precepts of morality.

VESPERS.

Vespers are a part of the divine Office and are said in the afternoon or evening. They consist of psalms, canticles, and other passages taken from the Sacred Scriptures together with prayers and hymns authorized by the Church or selected from the Fathers. Though this part of the Office may be said privately, it is generally sung publicly in our churches in the evenings of Sundays, holy days of obligation and other festivals. In rendering it the priest is assisted by the choir. As thus given, Vespers are a public evening song to God.

The faithful have always been encouraged and urged to attend Vespers on every possible occasion. They should not only be present, but should try to enter into the spirit which the service suggests. They are not bound to say any particular prayers, but it is a good thing to follow the services in the prayer-book, say the

Rosary, or give thanks to the divine bounty for the many favors bestowed. If congregational singing is customary, they should take part. They can, however, engage in any other devotional exercise they may choose.

There is no obligation to attend Vespers in the sense that those who absent themselves without cause are guilty of sin, but there is an obligation upon all to attend in this sense, that being an important service of the Church, and being designed to afford the people an opportunity to publicly unite in singing the praises of God, attendance becomes a part of the work of saving our soul, and can not be neglected with impunity. Everybody should cultivate a habit of attending all the regular services in the church, or as many as possible, among which Vespers are most conspicuous.

ATTITUDES AT VESPERS.

During the singing of Vespers the following should be observed: When the priest enters the sanctuary, the congregation rise. They kneel when the priest kneels to say the first prayer, and stand while he sings the "Deus in Adjutorium." Then they sit during the singing of the psalms. When the "Gloria Patri" is sung at the end of each psalm they bow the head. They stand during the chapter. If the priest stands or sits during the singing of the hymn, the congregation do likewise. They remain standing during the "Magnificat" and the prayers and responses that follow. The

Antiphon to the Blessed Virgin is then sung, and if the priest stands or sits during its rendition, the congregation should do the same. In case Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament follows, as it generally does, they kneel when the priest comes before the altar, and remain so until the Blessed Sacrament is put back into the tabernacle. When the tabernacle door is closed, they rise and stand during the singing of the Laudate.

BENEDICTION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.

Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament is the blessing of our Lord in the Holy Eucharist. The Sacred Host is exposed for a short time on the altar, during which the faithful present engage in acts of adoration, praise and thanksgiving, and towards the end receive the blessing of the Blessed Sacrament. As Jesus Christ is really present in this rite in the Sacred Host, it is He who blesses.

Usually Benediction follows Vespers, but not infrequently it is given separately. The priest comes out in full vestments, goes up to the altar, opens the tabernacle, takes out the Sacred Host and puts it in the Ostensorium or Monstrance which is placed on the altar or above the tabernacle in such a position as to be in full view of the congregation. The choir sing "O Salutaris Hostia" and "Tantum Ergo." These two hymns are always sung, and sometimes another hymn or litany between them.

When they are finished and the priest sings the prayer, a white veil is placed over his shoulders. He ascends the steps of the altar, and taking the Ostensorium and turning toward the people, gives the benediction by making with it the sign of the cross over the congregation. You should kneel all the time during the exposition, but at this moment you should be more profoundly reverent to receive the blessing of your Lord. The Sacred Host is then put away, the congregation arise and remain standing during the singing of the Laudate.

Attend this devotion as often as possible. The spiritual benefits are very great, as may be easily understood from the fact that you are in the presence of the eucharistic Christ. He there awaits the homage of His children, hears their devout prayers and gives them His blessing. To the good practical Catholic, there is nothing so touching and consoling, so full of encouragement and strength as this rite. There is something in it which softens the hardest sinner, which warms the coldest heart, which makes the indifferent fervent, and the weak strong; something so heavenly that we always come away from this beautiful service richer in love and mercy and goodness, richer in everything that makes for Heaven, than when we entered. To be present at Benediction is like sitting for a time in the company of Jesus and conversing with Him. It is a moment of divine companionship, and it brings into our lives a spiritual wealth, which never could come by any other means.

FORTY HOURS' ADORATION.

The Forty Hours' Adoration is a public devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. The Sacred Host is placed in a Monstrance or Ostensorium, and exposed on or above the altar for the silent adoration of the faithful. It remains there for forty hours in memory of the time during which the body of our Lord remained in the sepulchre. This devotion is regulated in such a way that the exposition generally takes place in each diocese in a continuous succession from one church to another throughout the year. Thus our Lord is being constantly adored publicly by the faithful. For various reasons it is permissible in this country to replace the Host in the tabernacle during the two intervening nights, so that where this is done it is not exposed for the full forty hours.

It originated in Milan about the year 1534 during a plague that scourged that city; was introduced into Rome in 1548 by St. Philip Neri; and from this centre of religion it spread throughout the world.

Besides being a devotion that directly refers to our Lord, it is enriched with many indulgences. A plenary indulgence upon the usual conditions of confession, Communion and prayers for the intention of the Holy Father, may be gained by all those who visit the church during the adoration, and shall spend some time in prayer. A partial indulgence of seven years and as many quarantines may be gained once each day by those who visit the Blessed Sacrament, and remain some time in prayer.

When the Sacred Host is thus exposed, it must be given supreme adoration, as it contains the body and blood of Christ. Hence persons must make a profound genuflection on both knees when coming into the church, when leaving it, and in passing before the altar where the Blessed Sacrament is exposed. Do not make this genuflection at the church door, but wait till you come to the pew you are to occupy, and make it at the pew when leaving. If there are large crowds in the aisles, make it in the pew.

This devotion is one of the most excellent practiced by Catholics as its object is our Lord in the Sacrament of His love. Our Savior is really present. He awaits the homage and hears the devout supplications of all. There is no greater means to strengthen faith, enkindle love and create enthusiasm in divine things.

Every Catholic in the parish should visit the church during this holy time, and spend some time in adoration and prayer. It is an excellent thing to go to confession and receive Holy Communion. A lively interest should be shown in its occurrence. As it is usually customary to donate flowers or contribute towards the decoration of the altar, the privilege of thus enriching the abiding place of our Lord should be readily accepted.

THE ROSARY.

The Rosary of St. Dominic, which is the one in most common use, is a form of prayer to the Mother of God said on beads. It consists of one hundred and fifty "Hail Marys," fifteen "Our Fathers," and fifteen "Glories." These are divided into three chaplets, and each chaplet is divided into five decades. Each decade consists of ten Hail Marys and is begun by an Our Father and ended with a Glory. The recitation of the chaplets is usually preceded by the Apostles Creed together with one Our Father and three Hail Marys for an increase of faith, hope and charity. While strictly speaking the Rosary consists of three chaplets, one of them or five decades may be said at a time.

The beads are used for the purpose of counting the Our Fathers and Hail Marys. The indulgences are attached to the beads, and are intended for one person only. If their owner gives these beads away or sells them, they lose the indulgences. If the chain of a rosary is broken and can be mended again, or if a few beads are lost, or if the beads are re-strung on another chain the indulgences remain. When many sets are blessed together, it is understood that each is blessed for the one who is to become the owner and who has gratuitously received it for the first time. For instance, a person may have several sets blessed, not with the intention of using them all himself, but with the intention of giving them to others. While these persons are not specified, it is understood that they are blessed for that one to whom he gratuitously gives a set and who uses

it for the first time. If the real owner gives them away or sells them or loses them beyond recovery, they lose the indulgences. If, however, they are given to another merely to accommodate him to count his beads and not to gain the indulgences, they do not lose the indulgences. The idea is that while they are attached to the beads they are personal. If a person wishes to use beads that are found they should be re-blessed.

To gain the indulgences it is necessary to meditate on the most holy mysteries of our faith. These mysteries are classified as joyful, sorrowful and glorious. The first or joyful mysteries are: first, the annunciation; second, the visitation; third, the nativity of our Lord; fourth, the presentation of our Lord in the temple; and fifth, the finding of our Lord in the temple. The sorrowful mysteries are: first, the agony in the garden; second, the scourging at the pillar; third, the crowning with thorns; fourth, the carrying of the cross; and fifth, the crucifixion. The glorious mysteries are: first, the resurrection; second, the ascension; third, the coming of the Holy Ghost; fourth, the assumption of the Blessed Virgin; and fifth, the coronation of the Blessed Virgin in Heaven. Those who cannot meditate can gain the indulgences by devoutly reciting the Rosary.

Another condition for gaining the indulgences is that the beads must be held in the hand and used in the customary way while reciting the prayers. When, however, two or more recite them together it suffices for one to hold the rosary beads to regulate its recital and the others, laying aside all other occupation, shall com-

port themselves respectfully while praying with the one who holds the beads.

The Rosary is a beautiful form of prayer, and all Catholics should be familiar with it. They should have a set of rosary beads, carry it with them, and be acquainted with the scope and meaning of the above mysteries. Most prayer-books point out not only the manner of reciting it, but give short meditations on the different mysteries. It is a most useful family devotion, and should not be given up in the home.

THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS.

The Stations of the Cross are a devotional exercise, by which the participants follow our Lord in a manner through His passion and meditate on the most prominent features of it. By His passion are understood the time that elapsed and the scenes or events intervening between His bloody sweat in the garden of Gethsemani and His death upon the cross.

There has always been a great desire on the part of the faithful to go over the same ground and meditate on what took place during the last moments of our Lord's stay on earth. The custom of doing this first arose among the people of Jerusalem, and was probably begun by the Blessed Virgin herself. Afterwards pilgrims from all over the world flocked to Jerusalem for this purpose. But as the distance was far and many could not go, the idea of journeying in spirit through

the passion was conceived and introduced into Spain. The most important scenes of the passion were typified by stations or little chapels which served to recall in a vivid manner the actual occurrences. From there the practice was introduced into Italy, and thence spread throughout the Catholic world.

In our churches the passion scenes are represented generally by pictures or groups of statuary figures, fourteen in number, each portraying a particularly sad scene in our Lord's way to Calvary. As he journeyed from place to place, the devotion is more properly called the "Way of the Cross." In imitation of His journey we go around the church.

To make the Stations of the Cross, therefore, is to go around the church, stop at the different pictures or stations, say appropriate prayers and meditate on the event which that picture or station conveys to the mind. It is following in spirit our divine Savior in the last trying moments of His earthly career.

In performing this devotion we must move from station to station, and make a short meditation on the subject which each represents. This is not necessary when a number make it publicly together. One goes around the stations while the others remain in their places. The necessary prayers and meditations are found in all prayer books. To gain the indulgences, the regular prayers for the intention of the Holy Father must be said at the end—generally five Our Fathers and Hail Marys and the Glory be to the Father, etc.

There are crucifixes specially blessed by those who have the authority, which are intended for the sick or

those who cannot come to the church. By holding such a crucifix in the hand and reciting the Our Father, Hail Mary and the Glory twenty times, and at the same time meditating on the passion, the indulgences may be gained. Fourteen of these are for the stations proper, five in honor of the five wounds of our Lord, and one for the intention of the Holy Father.

THE SCAPULAR.

Scapular is a Latin word meaning shoulder. It was applied to a garment worn over the shoulders and coming down nearly to the ground. Some Religious Orders, notably the Carmelites, wear such a style of habit. The religious scapular of today is a symbol of the above shoulder garment. It consists of two pieces of cloth attached by two strings or pieces of tape, and worn over the shoulders in such a manner that one of the pieces comes on the breast and the other on the back. There are a number of these scapulars, but the one in most common use and worn by almost every Catholic in honor of the Mother of God is that of our Lady of Mt. Carmel, known as the brown scapular. It is an abridgment of the Carmelite shoulder garment. It originated in a vision of the Mother of God to St. Simon Stock, and she promised great spiritual favors to those who would wear it. Besides her special assistance and protection, she promised that whoever should wear it would not suffer the punishment of eternal fire.

Any Catholic can be invested with it, even little children. But it is customary to invest children with it on the occasion of their first Communion or Confirmation.

To gain the advantages derived from the brown scapular, it must be of the prescribed form and material, that is, square or oblong in shape, and made of brown woolen cloth or a color similar to brown; it must be blessed and the person enrolled in the Confraternity of the Scapular by a priest having the power, and the name of the person enrolled sent to the Carmelite Fathers in Rome; and it must be worn constantly. Taking it off when necessary, if replaced again, does not forfeit the benefits. If it be laid aside for a time, either through carelessness or indifference, and the person afterwards wishes to assume it he may do so without a new enrollment. If, however, it has been laid aside through contempt or impiety or with the intention of abandoning it or so long that the memory of it has ceased, a new enrollment is safer. If it be lost or worn out, procure a new one, and without having it blessed and without a new enrollment, put it on and wear it. It is not necessary to bless a new scapular.

The spiritual benefits accruing from this scapular are so many that a mere mention of them can be made here.

1. The special protection of the Mother of God, especially at the hour of death. She promised that those who wear this her livery at the hour of death shall not suffer Hell's fire.

2. A participation in all the good works of the Carmelite Order and of the Church. Deceased members of the Confraternity of the Scapular share in the fruits of all Masses and prayers offered up for them by this Order which are many.

3. The gaining of a great number of indulgences.

CHURCHING WOMEN.

A short time after the birth of our Lord, his blessed Mother went to the temple and submitted to the Mosaic law of purification. Though she was not obliged to comply with the law, she did so, even to the extent of making the customary offering.

In imitation of her conduct, Catholic mothers present themselves at the church and receive a blessing in thanksgiving for a happy delivery. It is supposed to be their first visit to the church after child-birth, and hence the blessing is called "churching." But it is not necessary to receive it the first time they come to the church, nor is there any obligation to receive it at all. It does not bind under the pain of the least sin, because there is absolutely no defilement in Christian motherhood.

Since there is no obligation requiring mothers to seek it, if a notable period has elapsed since child-birth, it is just as well to let it go. It is, however, a great and public act of thanksgiving, and, therefore a pious and beneficial practice. It cannot be given at the home.

According to the rubrics, the woman, bearing a lighted candle, presents herself at the door of the church, where she is met by the priest, and after preliminary prayers, she is admitted to the church, and comes before the altar where the blessing is given.

But with us it is customary for the woman to come direct to the altar-rail where the priest meets her and performs the ceremony. She should hold a blessed candle in her hand and should kiss the stole when presented to her. If an offering is customary, she should make one. The Mother of God made one.

THE LITANIES.

Litany is derived from the Greek, and means a pious supplication or an ardent prayer to God to hear us or to the saints to intercede for us. Thus, the words, "Lord, have mercy on us," constitute a litany, and the same is true in regard to the words, "Holy Mary, pray for us."

Each supplication is a litany, though the supplications may be arranged in the form of a set. Such a set is always referred to in the Liturgy in the plural, because it is made up of many litanic invocations, but in the English it is customary to refer to it in the singular.

If we except those contained in the Bible, the Church has approved of only five litanies. These are the Litany of the Saints, the Litany of the Blessed Virgin, or of Loretto as it is commonly called, the Litany of the Holy Name of Jesus, the Litany of the Sacred Heart,

and the Litany of St. Joseph. She has not approved of any other, nor does she allow any other to be used in her public services. There are a large number of other litanies in common use, and though the Church does not sanction them, she does not prohibit their private use if found in duly authorized prayer books.

The most striking features of the litanies are the constant repetition and the distinction between the invocations to God or any of the three divine Persons, and those to the saints. In reference to the former, God or the saints are invoked a number of times under different titles, mystical figures and favorite appellations. It cannot be doubted that this form of prayer is pleasing to God, for the Old Testament abounds in it, and our Lord approved of and recommended it. A notable example is the parable of the man who in the middle of the night importuned his neighbor to arise and lend him loaves of bread. Another example is the blind man who sat by the way begging. He kept crying out, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me," until our Lord heeding his constant repetitions, turned to him and restored his sight. The latter feature is the sharp distinction between an invocation to God and one to the saints. God is always beseeched to have mercy on us, to hear us, to help us, while the saints are always asked to pray and make intercession for us. The distinction expresses a fundamental doctrine in Catholic teaching.

The litanies should be a favorite form of prayer. It is an excellent custom to add one of them, especially the Litany of the Blessed Virgin, to our morning or

evening prayers. It is well, also, to recite the Litany of the Saints at such times as the Church requires it to be said in her public offices, namely, the Ember Days, Rogation Days, Ordination Days, and the feast of St. Mark, April 25th. To make reparation for blasphemy, bad language and cursing, the Litany of the Holy Name, or of the Sacred Heart, can be said. They will be found to be sources of great spiritual blessings.

MAY DEVOTIONS.

The month of May is dedicated to the Mother of God. She is the most exalted and beautiful of God's creatures, and it is highly becoming that the most beautiful and promising period of the year should be dedicated to her memory. Devotion to her dates back to the time when she became the Mother of our Savior, and has been practiced with more or less intensity ever since, and will continue as long as He is acknowledged Lord and Master.

This is inevitable in view of her relations with Infinity and our conception of the sacredness of motherhood. But the custom of concentrating and intensifying these devotions during the month of May is of recent date. It was introduced into the English speaking world about a half century ago by an Italian Father. It was never formally approved by the Church, though it was permitted and encouraged in various ways. Pius VII, in a brief dated 1815 granted indulgences to those who would practice these devotions.

Thus within comparatively recent times the practice of May devotions to the Blessed Virgin has sprung up among us. They have lately assumed marvelous proportions, which would indicate that, aside from their intrinsic worth, they are popular and are looked upon as forces in awakening religious fervor. They are not marked by anything very new or special, but are rather an ensemble of old prayers and practices. They generally consist of public prayers, decorating her altar with flowers, singing hymns in her honor, reciting the Rosary or saying the Litany of Loretto daily in the church during the month of May.

The month of May encourages closer relations with her who has the sublime and sacred title of Mother of God. It is well; for next to our Lord and at His right hand she stands the peerless advocate of mankind, the staunch protectress of virtue, the merciful mother of every soul who deigns to call upon her name. There are no two Mediators; there is only One, Christ our Lord; but it would be foolish to say that others of tested virtue cannot supplicate this Mediator, and through His merits claim recognition before the throne of Omnipotence. And who has more influence with the Son than the Mother?

No saint stands in the same plane with the Virgin Mother. While this is true, we do not pay her divine worship; we do not consider her clothed with any power in herself; whatever power she possesses is the free gift of God and the results of the operation of divine grace. She is only a human creature, but raised by God to the heights of perfection. Hence we never ask her to have

mercy on us, but always to pray for us. We do, however, believe that she is the real Mother of God and all that that sacred title implies; we do hold that she was a sinless, virginal creature who now occupies the highest place in Heaven next to our Lord, and the Church will defend all the consequences that flow from this heavenly exaltation.

CONFRATERNITIES AND SODALITIES.

A confraternity is a pious organization established by proper ecclesiastical authority. If other confraternities are affiliated with it, it is called an arch-confraternity. There are a large number of them, and they are the means of an incalculable amount of good. They are enriched with indulgences to such an extent that in many cases it is difficult to compute them. Among these best known are the Confraternities of the Rosary, of the Brown Scapular, of the Blessed Virgin, of the Apostleship of Prayer in league with the Sacred Heart, of St. Vincent de Paul, of the Holy Childhood, etc.

Besides these confraternities, there are in almost every parish sodalities which are pious associations established to meet the needs and requirements of different classes of people, or to carry on certain lines of work. It cannot be denied that they are the means of accomplishing much good, and on this account they should receive the support of the people.

The most important are the children's organizations.

namely, the Children of Mary for the girls and the St. Aloysius' Sodality for the boys. The girls and boys belonging to them receive a training they are not liable to forget. They go to confession and receive Holy Communion monthly, attend Mass regularly, are governed by most salutary rules, and in most places have a library of choice and well selected books. Parents should be particular to see that their children belong to them.

There are numerous other societies and sodalities organized for religious, social, fraternal, literary, benevolent and temperance work. While people are left at liberty to join any approved association, they are especially encouraged to belong to such as are purely religious in character. Select those best suited to your needs and in which you can do the most good. Do not belong to too many and as a consequence liable not to take an interest in any of them. Select one or two that are favored by the pastor, and be good, active members. Observe the rules, go to Communion on appointed days, attend the meetings regularly and be model sodalists in every particular. A great many lasting benefits will thus be gained.

An organization has a wonderful influence for regularity and enthusiasm. You may say you can be just as good without belonging to any sodality, but experience teaches the contrary. You may also maintain that you can go to the Sacraments monthly without being a member of any society, but you will fail to do it. You may go for two or three months and then a trifling excuse will cause you to miss. The organization has a staying power. It begets ardor and enthusiasm in re-

ligious affairs,—which are so much needed at present, for we live amidst conditions that are unfavorable to true religious fervor and devotion. Join a sodality and be good, loyal members.

FORBIDDEN SOCIETIES.

There are certain societies which are condemned by the Church and to which Catholics are not allowed to belong. The Church condemns them because they are inimical to sound faith and opposed to her authority. Some of these organizations are named by the Church, and for this reason are said to be “nominally” condemned. The societies nominally condemned and most active in this country are the Free Masons, the Odd Fellows, the Knights of Pythias and the Sons of Temperance. No Catholic can belong to any of these societies.

There are other condemned societies which, though their names are not mentioned, may be known from the application of the following rules:

1. All societies are forbidden which profess rationalism or naturalism as opposed to revealed Christianity.

2. If any society's obligation be such as to “bind its members to secrecy, even when rightly questioned by competent authority, then no one can be a member of it and at the same time be admitted to the Sacraments of the Catholic Church.”

3. The same is true of any organization that "binds its members to a promise of blind obedience to accept in advance and to obey whatever orders, lawful or unlawful, that may emanate from its chief authority, because such a promise is contrary both to reason and to conscience."

4. "If a society works or plots, either openly, or in secret, against the Church, or against lawful authorities, then to be a member of it is to be excluded from the membership of the Catholic Church." (Pastoral Letter, Third Plenary Council of Baltimore, Dec. 7, 1884.)

5. "If a society, besides being secret and oath-bound, has a chaplain of its own, and a ritual prescribing prayers and religious services, then such a society becomes also heretical and schismatical, and members cannot be counted any more as Catholics." (Third Plenary Council of Baltimore, Chap. III., Sec. 249.)

A MISSION.

A mission is a period of time partly devoted to religious exercises. It is intended for the mass of the people who have to perform their accustomed work and pursue their regular avocations.

The exercises are generally held in the morning, afternoon and evening at such a time as to best accommodate the congregation. These exercises are conducted by missionary Fathers who have been trained

for their work for years and have a vast amount of experience in dealing with all classes. They come to a parish for the special purpose of preaching the great truths of salvation without fear or favor, of straightening out the accounts of the soul, and arousing zeal and fervor in the practice of religion. Sinners are thus reclaimed, the lukewarm aroused, and the good encouraged to become more perfect.

A mission is, therefore, a most efficacious means of strengthening faith, eradicating evil and increasing virtue. Its benefits are so great that every one should be careful to make the missions which are from time to time given in the parish church. Many may be able to turn them into retreats by taking a vacation from their business affairs and devoting the time exclusively to the affairs of the soul. If all the time cannot be so spent, then as much as possible, by punctually attending the exercises, listening attentively to the sermons and being as recollected as circumstances will permit.

It should be borne in mind that missionary Fathers have no object in view except to make you see yourself as God sees you. Their preaching would be useless if intended merely to please the ear and delight the imagination. Their sermons are strong, practical instructions on the truths of religion and morality. They must come home to every one by baring his faults, habits and sins. Regard them as such. Do not blame the missionary Father for preaching in such a manner, nor the pastor for allowing him to so preach, but blame yourselves for allowing yourselves to be vulnerable in so

many places. Profit by their sermons, and resolve to do better.

The most beneficial results of a mission are a careful examination of conscience, a good confession and a worthy Holy Communion. Be most careful about the examination of conscience. A good confession depends upon it. Go into the accounts of the soul with earnestness. Be honest with God and yourself. Rectify what is wrong at any cost. Take some good resolutions and keep them. Do not be a "mission Catholic," that is, one who makes a mission and then neglects the practice of religion and the reception of the Sacraments until another mission is given.

It is a good thing to begin the examination of conscience early so as to be prepared to go to confession early. Do not delay confession to the last moment, because the limited time may prevent your making a good one.

A RETREAT.

A retreat is a period of time devoted exclusively and silently to prayer, meditation and religious devotions. It is a practical withdrawal from the affairs of the world and a close union of the soul with God. It differs from a mission in as much as the time is entirely taken up with religious exercises, and from a triduum in as much as it is more formal and not limited to three days. Retreats are of various durations, but generally last a week or eight days.

The practice of making at least an occasional retreat is a most excellent one. St. Ignatius says: "I do not know, nor can I conceive a more effectual means of sanctifying oneself than the exercises of a spiritual retreat." No greater opportunity can be given for renewed activity in the service of God and the salvation of our soul than that which a retreat affords.

While missions, triduums and novenas are frequently made by people in the world, retreats are seldom made by the public on account of the impossibility of a very large number being able to devote their entire time to them. But many should be willing to do something extraordinary to counteract the extraordinary forces that are drifting them away from religion. The activity of the world is so strenuous, temptations to evil so strong and real religious influences so weak that the majority of people pursuing their daily avocations are liable to become cold and indifferent towards, if not openly defiant of, the teachings of religion and the precepts of morality. The conditions that prevail in our midst are of such a character as to cool the most fervent piety, shake the firmest resolutions, and overcome the stoutest hearts unless something be done toward effecting a closer union with God.

Priests and religious have their annual retreats. While it is not so easy for the faithful at large to do this, still a good many could, if they made an earnest effort, turn the missions that are given from time to time in their parish churches into retreats by taking a vacation from work and in silence, meditation and

prayer devoting the time exclusively to spiritual matters.

A NOVENA.

Novena is a pure Latin word and means nine. As known to Catholics, it means a devotion consisting of prayers said or religious exercises held each day for nine days. Great latitude is allowed in the form, duration and nature of these prayers and exercises. They may be long or short, public or private, or assume such a character as to best suit the tastes of those who make them, provided they are said or held each day for nine days. Novenas range in their nature from a simple prayer said once each day for nine days to the grand public functions of religion held in the church. The prayer book gives a variety of forms which may be followed. Any action, however, which has a religious character may be performed, such as receiving Holy Communion, visiting a church, going to Mass, having Masses said, etc.

A novena is made for the purpose of more worthily celebrating a feast or mystery of religion or of commemorating a certain event. As there is no obligation in making it, it does not imply the obligation of going to confession or Communion, but it is an excellent custom to receive Holy Communion on the feast day, or tenth day from the beginning of the novena. The novena itself ends the day before.

It is highly recommended to make a novena in honor

of favorite saints, or in times of anxiety and trouble, or when we wish to secure some special favor from Almighty God.

A TRIDUUM.

Triduum is a Latin word for three days. As a religious term it means a devotion or special spiritual exercises of three days' duration. It has much in common with a novena; both are intended as a preparation for the more worthy celebration of some feast, or as means of securing favors from Almighty God, or as simple works of piety.

There is great latitude allowed in the nature of the exercises of a triduum or of the works performed. They range from a practical three days' retreat to a single prayer said each day for three days. Most prayer books give a number of forms which may be followed. Besides these forms, triduums may be made by hearing Masses, having Masses said, visiting churches or performing any good acts according to the taste or desire of those making them. It should be begun in time to end the day before the feast for which it is intended to be a preparation. A triduum may be made when time will not permit the making of a novena.

THE PARISH.

People should take a pride in their parish church and co-operate with the clergy in whatever pertains to its welfare and support. They should show by their assistance that they are interested in what is of such vital importance to their religion. The more interest parishioners take in their church, the closer they are drawn to it and the better Christians they become.

Baptisms, marriages and funerals must take place from the parish church. Also all sick calls must be attended from it. Catholics, however, are allowed freedom in the choice of a confessor.

One of the most baneful spiritual features of city life is moving into and out of parishes. The results of this constant moving about are that people scarcely ever get acquainted with the clergy and never become attached to any church. The clergy are known only because seen at the altar, and the church is frequented without enthusiasm. How deeply attached to a church are those who consider it a home, who have worked for it, who have the old family pew for years, who have begged, solicited, prayed for it! Such attachment results in making them better, more loyal and more faithful.

And although moving from one place to another cannot be eliminated, its evils can to an extent be minimized. This can be done by making yourself known when moving into a new locality. First inquire for your parish church. Many give the excuse that they miss Mass because they do not know where the church

is located. Become acquainted with the pastor or clergy as soon as possible. If you have children give their names and ages. Lend your assistance to what is being done in the parish, affiliate yourself, and especially the children, with the sodalities or church organizations, join any movement that has the sanction of the pastor, send your children to the school, and it is wonderful how quickly you will become interested in your new home.

It is a courtesy to first call on the pastor when coming into a parish, as well as to tell him when you are leaving. If you have a pew it is only just to inform the one who has charge of the pews that you discontinue its rental. It frequently happens that the only notice received in this regard is when the pastor or sexton is informed after six months or a year that the party has moved out of the parish.

THE CHURCH AND THE CLERGY.

In this country the Church must be maintained and the clergy supported by the gratuitous offerings of the faithful. They willingly contribute toward erecting churches, building schools and providing a livelihood for their pastors. They are all the better for doing this noble work,—giving of their hard earned means to advance the cause of their religion. It is now absolutely necessary to have good churches, to have them well kept and in good condition, so that the people will take a

just pride in them. Too much cannot be done to make a becoming home in our midst for the real presence of our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, and it should be sufficiently attractive to induce the faithful to take delight in visiting Him and offering Him their prayers and supplications.

To have churches of such a character and in such condition certainly requires money. Few have little idea of the expenses incurred in connection with maintaining a large church. But they must be maintained at any cost, for not only the glory of God, but the good of religion and the salvation of souls depend upon it.

Catholics should, therefore, take the liveliest interest in everything pertaining to the welfare of their parish church. Families should have a family pew, and single persons should have a seat in their church.

All can contribute to the various collections either taken up on Sundays or on special occasions and should lend their assistance towards the success of anything going on in the parish. And they will be better for doing it. It will draw out what is best in their nature; it will give them a pride in their church; it will give them the consciousness of helping to advance the cause of Christ and make His name a living force among them. Let everyone do his share and contribute his mite and take an interest in what is being done. Whatever you give, give it willingly and cheerfully.

But never stay away from church because you have not the customary offering, nor from the priest's house because of adverse circumstances in life. The church is full of God's poor; Christ came to preach to the poor;

He loved to work among the poor, and His priests are working among the poor to this day. Give if you can, give cheerfully and be conscientious about it; but let no earthly conditions induce you for a moment to give up the practice of your religion.

THE PAROCHIAL IDEA.

The parish is an integral part of the organization of the Catholic Church. Practically the whole Catholic world is divided into districts presided over by a pastor; a number of these districts are presided over by a Bishop; and all of them presided over by the Holy Father. These districts are called parishes, and herein lies the parochial idea.

The pastor is given certain rights in the parish he presides over, in order that he may be encouraged to work. But he has duties to perform. He is held responsible for the good of religion in his parish, must build it up, must manage it, must see that all things necessary for the parishioners to practice their religion are there.

The parishioners, too, have rights in their parish church: the right to worship there, and to fulfill their other religious obligations; but they, too, have duties to perform towards it. They must be obedient to their pastor, and help to build up and maintain the church and school according to their means. If they do not do this they are out of harmony with the idea at the bot-

tom of their Church's organization. That happens when they stay away, when they go to another church, or when they do not support it the way good, loyal Catholics should. If they have rights which they like to enjoy, they also have duties which they must perform.

Working along on parochial lines, the Church has been built up. She says to each and every pastor in America: "I will give you a small district and I want you to work there. Establish the Church there, do your duty, and I will not take it away from you." There are the rights and there also are the duties. She also says to the people of that parish: "That church is yours, yours to worship in and to perform your other religious obligations, but you must support it and be loyal to it by your presence and assistance."

CATHOLIC EDUCATION.

It is now a settled policy of the Church in America to build and maintain schools for the education of Catholic children. The necessity of establishing a Catholic school system grew out of an essential defect in the public school system. That defect is the prohibition of teaching religion of any kind.

Catholics must dissent from such a prohibition, for experience proves that the youth must be taught religion for the proper upbuilding of Christian character. If it does not find a place in the regular curriculum of

studies, the youth will grow into manhood or womanhood without a proper conception of their duties towards God and without a sufficient understanding of, and submissive obedience to, the laws of God and His divine commands, which will inevitably lead to irreligion, dishonesty and immorality in public and private life. The results will certainly be disastrous.

The Church earnestly desires to guard the rising generation against such evils. No greater misfortune could happen to them than to be educated outside the influences of sound Christian belief and conduct. Recognizing the baneful effects of an irreligious education, the Third Baltimore Council ordered and decreed the following:

1. A parish school must be erected and perpetually supported near every church, within two years from the promulgation of the decrees of this Council, unless the Bishop should consider it can be delayed for a time for grave reasons.

2. Any pastor who within this time shall have prevented the erection and support of this school by his grave neglect, or who will not heed the admonition of his Bishop in the matter, will be subject to removal from his parish.

3. A mission or parish which so neglects to assist the priest in the building and support of the school, that through their sheer neglect it can not be kept up, shall be reproved and reprimanded by the Bishop, who will

take prudent and efficacious measures for its necessary support in the future.

4. All Catholic parents must send their children to the parochial schools, unless they otherwise provide sufficiently and plainly, either at home or in some other Catholic school, for their Christian education. If, for one reason or another, permission is given to any children to attend other schools, the parents of such children must provide against all possible danger to their morals and faith; and the reason for sending them to those schools must be satisfactory to the Bishop.

The Fathers of the same Council in their pastoral letter said: "Education, in order to be sound and produce beneficial results, must develop what is best in man, and make him not only clever, but good. A one-sided education will develop a one-sided life; and such a life will surely topple over, and so will every social system that is built up of such lives. Take away religion from the people, and morality will soon follow; morality gone, even their physical condition will ere long degenerate into the corruption that breeds decrepitude, while their intellectual attainments would only serve as a light to guide them to deeper depths of vice and ruin."

Parents should heed their voice by helping to build and support Catholic schools and by sending their children to them so that the little ones may not be robbed of their Christian rights. They should co-operate with the pastor in any plans which he may think proper for the benefit of Catholic education in the parish. The help and co-operation of all Catholic people are needed

in this noble work. They should assist in erecting schools at whatever cost; and parents are lacking in their duty who do not send their children to them.

It is a great mistake to imagine that religion alone is taught there. It receives the same attention as any other branch of study, but no more. It is put on the same footing as any other study. All other branches of learning receive equal attention. Our schools have really reached a high degree of excellency and proficiency in all departments of knowledge. It is not secular education alone, nor religious education alone, but both combined in one harmonious whole that should be instilled into the minds of the youth.

THE CHOIR.

The choir is a body of singers who assist in rendering the music at divine services. To thus take part in any of the acts of divine worship is a great and singular privilege. God loves music as He loves order and harmonious relations. Order and harmony are seen in all His works from the lowest to the highest. He has created no being without these qualities.

It is not strange, therefore, that He should be pleased to have His praises chanted in sweet song. The Scriptures bear abundant evidence to establish this fact. The psalmist says, "Let them praise His name in choir; let them sing to Him with the tymbal and psaltery. Sing ye to the Lord a new canticle; let His praise be

in the church of the saints. Praise Him (God) with sound of trumpet; praise Him with psaltery and harp; praise Him with trumpet and choir; praise Him with strings and organs. Praise Him on high sounding cymbals; praise Him on cymbals of joy. Let every spirit praise the Lord." There are a great many other passages of like import. The most notable example of singing the praises of God was when our Lord was born. There was not a silent voice in Heaven. The universe was filled with the sweet melody of angelic voices. The choir imitates them, for in a manner our Savior is reborn on our altars. How great, therefore, is the position it holds in our churches! The members should never forget the dignity of the sacred functions which they assist in performing.

As they generally occupy a place by themselves, there is danger of their not showing that respect and devotion in the church which are manifested by the other members of the congregation. They should be on their guard against talking, laughing or whispering. There is danger, too, in their becoming so familiar with the services, and especially the parts they render, that their force, meaning and sacredness are lost. A good precaution to take against these dangers is to follow the services, when not actually engaged in singing, in the same manner as if seated with the congregation.

THE ECCLESIASTICAL YEAR.

The ecclesiastical year is not the same as the civil year. The former begins on the first Sunday of Advent while the latter begins on January 1st, or New Year's day. What Advent means and when it comes, see Advent.

The periods of the ecclesiastical year are grouped around Christmas, Epiphany and Easter. The two former are immovable; that is, they are fixed to certain dates, one on December 25th, and the other January 6th, but Easter is movable; that is, it is fixed to no certain date. Computing from the dates of these feasts, the different Sundays of the ecclesiastical year are arranged. There are four Sundays before Christmas and one after, six after Epiphany, nine before Easter and thirty-one after, which, with the Sunday that Easter itself falls on, make up the fifty-two Sundays or weeks of the year.

The Sundays before Christmas are numbered first, second, third and fourth Sunday of Advent, and the one after Christmas is known as the Sunday within the Octave of Christmas. The feast of the Circumcision is always celebrated on the Octave of Christmas, and consequently falls on New Year's day. The civil year, therefore, begins on the feast of the Circumcision of our Lord. The Sundays after Epiphany are numbered first, second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth Sunday after Epiphany. The Sundays before Easter are called Septuagesima, Sexagesima, Quinquagesima, first, second, third and fourth Sunday of Lent, Passion Sunday and

Palm Sunday. Those after Easter are called first, second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth Sunday after Easter, Pentecost Sunday, and first, second, etc., up to the twenty-fourth Sunday after Pentecost. The first Sunday after Pentecost is Trinity Sunday. Whether there are twenty-four Sundays after Pentecost depends upon the date of Easter. If it comes early, a corresponding number of Sundays are taken from the Sundays after Epiphany and added to those after Pentecost. If Christmas occurs on a Sunday, the first Sunday after or within the octave is omitted and the same is true of Epiphany.

It is easy to understand why the above names should be given to the different Sundays of the year, with the exception of the three Sundays before Lent. The origin of Septuagesima, which means seventy, Sexagesima, which means sixty, and Quinquagesima, which means fifty, is not so clear. How to connect these numbers to the Sundays indicated is difficult. Butler in his "Feasts and Fasts" says that certain churches and classes in the early times were desirous of fasting forty days before Easter, but as it was customary to omit fasting on some days within the Lenten season, they were obliged to begin earlier to have the full forty days to fast. The more days omitted, and there was no uniform custom in the omissions, the earlier they would have to begin. Hence, they began the penitential season on the seventieth, sixtieth or fiftieth day before Easter. We at the present time leave out the Sundays, and on this account must begin Lent not forty but forty-six days before Easter. This custom would ac-

count for the names applied to the three Sundays in question.

FEAST DAYS.

A feast day is a day on which the Church annually celebrates mysteries of faith, events of religious character, or the birth and glory of the saints. The Church does not celebrate by indulging in worldly festivities and merriment, but by offering up the Sacrifice of the Mass and saying the Office in memory of the occasion.

Some of the feasts are fixed to certain days of the month, and these are said to be immovable because they always occur on the same date, as Christmas on December 25th, or the Immaculate Conception on December 8th; others are not attached to any given date, but are regulated according to Easter, coming early or late in the year with this great Christian festival, and these are, therefore, said to be movable, such as the Ascension of our Lord, which is held forty days after Easter or Pentecost, held fifty days after.

According to their observance, feasts are divided into two classes,—those on which there is an obligation on the part of the people to hear Mass and rest from servile works, known as holy days of obligation, and those on which there is no such obligation binding the faithful, but the clergy say Mass and read the Office in honor of the particular mystery or saint commemorated. According to their rank, feasts are divided into doubles, semi-

doubles and simples. Some of them are of such excellency and importance that the Church makes preparation by prayer or penance the day before, known as the vigil, and continues the feast for eight days after, called an octave. A vigil is a preparation for a feast; an octave is the continuance of the feast for eight days. Only the most important feasts have a vigil and an octave. The octave proper is the eighth day from the feast.

The Church is rich in the number and glory of her saints. They are counted by the thousands and thousands. Besides the Mother of God, there are the Apostles, the martyrs, the virgins, the doctors, the confessors and holy men and women in every age, country and clime. They constitute a vast throng. So numerous are they that the feasts to their memory cannot all be placed. It frequently happens that more than one fall on the same day, or on account of their movableness, one may come in conflict with another. In this case they are transferred or simply commemorated by a prayer in the Mass and by a prayer and an antiphon in the Office, or entirely omitted.

In reference to the feasts of the saints, it is not their birth into this world that is celebrated, but their birth (*natalitia*) into everlasting life, which is the day of their death.

In the numerous Calendars a list of these feasts and the dates on which they occur will be found. It is well to select some of them for which you have a liking and make them occasions for a renewal of religious fervor. This is especially true of the feasts of our Lord, the

Blessed Virgin, favorite saints and particularly your patron saint.

SUNDAY.

Sunday is the Christian's day of worship and rest. The divine law sets aside one day in the week for these purposes, and that day is Sunday.

In accordance with the divine law the Church teaches us that Sunday must be kept holy by publicly worshiping God and resting from servile works. Public worship supposes some form of sacrifice. It was so considered in old law and is so considered in the new. Our Savior abrogated all the olden sacrifices, and substituted the great sacrifice of the Mass. That is why the Church requires us to be present at Mass every Sunday. Mere attendance at Mass, however, does not fulfill all our obligations in reference to keeping this day holy. It is to be spent in a religious manner, that is, some time devoted to religion, piety and charity. The Church does not specify these works in particular or the amount of time to be devoted to them, but she urges the people to try to receive Holy Communion, to listen to the preaching of the Word of God, to perform some of the spiritual or corporal works of mercy, to read religious literature, to be more prayerful, charitable, and forgiving.

After our religious duties have been performed, amusements and recreation are allowed, provided they

are innocent, inoffensive, decent, grave and moderate. They must give no scandal, nor interfere with religious services, nor prevent others from resting or practicing their religion. We should avoid a Pharisaical attitude on the one hand, and unbecomingness, licentiousness, profanity and sinful excesses on the other.

Works of religion, charity and necessity are always permitted. While there may be circumstances and occasions when servile works are allowed, we should not, however, be lenient with ourselves in this regard. Too many are breaking the Sabbath—thinking little of ordering work to be done or accepting positions in which they must labor constantly every day of the week. A man is not just to himself and does not fulfill his religious duties who is in a position where Sunday work is required unless he makes an earnest effort to change his surroundings or secure employment which will allow him to spend Sunday as a Christian should spend it.

HOLY DAYS OF OBLIGATION.

There are certain days which Catholics must spend in the same manner as they spend Sundays. These are called "holy days of obligation," because people are obliged under the pain of grievous sin to keep them holy by resting from servile work and attending Mass, if they possibly can. In this country these days are six in number, namely, New Year's day, the Ascension of our Lord, the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin

(August 15), All Saints' day (November 1), the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin (December 8), and Christmas day.

There can be no doubt that the Church by virtue of her governing power has authority to establish these days of extra worship and make their observance binding in conscience. Since the Church has done so, we should be very careful to keep them. They make binding a twofold obligation, namely, attendance at the holy Sacrifice and rest from servile work.

Never miss Mass on these days. Few need be absent if they have the will. We sin just as grievously by non-attendance on a holy day as on Sunday. With regard to work, the ecclesiastical law should be observed. Too many pursue their ordinary avocations on holy days without sufficient reasons. They see others at work, and they think they must work, too.

We should remember that where circumstances are of such nature as to render it impractical or in some cases impossible to quit work on these days or on Sundays, there is a moral obligation more or less binding all classes and individuals of so changing their surroundings that they can practice their religion in its fullness. In other words, if our position is such that we cannot practice our religion, cannot go to church on Sundays or holy days, or cannot cease from labor, we should endeavor to secure a position that will permit us to do these things. The welfare of the soul is of greater importance than the success of any earthly undertaking.

FASTING AND ABSTAINING.

Fasting means refraining from the use of food. Two kinds of fasting are recognized, namely, the natural fast and the ecclesiastical one. The former means a literal refraining from the least particle of anything taken as food or drink. Such a fast from midnight of the day on which Holy Communion is received until after its reception is absolutely necessary. The only exceptions to this rule are in favor of those who are in danger of death and in certain other cases of sickness, explained under the heading of "Holy Communion." The ecclesiastical fast is restraint in the quantity of food taken. On days of such fast but one full meal is permitted, generally considered the mid-day meal, though some warm drink, such as tea, coffee, or chocolate with a small piece of bread is allowed in the morning, and a "collation," not to exceed the fourth part of an ordinary meal, is allowed in the evening.

To abstain is not to eat a certain kind of food, namely, flesh-meat. It has reference to the quality of food, while fasting refers to quantity. As may be seen, there is a vast difference between fasting and abstaining. All Catholics who have attained the use of reason and are not lawfully dispensed are obliged to abstain on certain days.

The laws of fasting and abstaining are of ecclesiastical origin, and the Church can dispense from their obligation in certain cases and frequently does. Our Lord did not command his followers to fast. He did, however, fast Himself, prescribed rules for fasting, and

on one occasion when asked about the necessity of fasting, replied that when the Bridegroom (meaning Himself) was with them they would not fast, but when He would be taken away they would fast, thus sanctioning the custom. The Church has insisted on fasting and abstaining from the earliest times, and though there may be conditions in the modern world which cause her to materially change the rigors of the ancient fast, she will never give up a practice that is productive of so much good.

DAYS OF FAST AND ABSTINENCE.

All the days of Lent, Sundays excepted, are fast days of obligation for all who have reached the twenty-first year of their age and have not reached their sixtieth year, and who are not dispensed by lawful authority.

Those who are exempted from fasting are the sick, the very poor, pregnant women, those nursing children, and in general all those who, on account of old age, a weak constitution or hard labor cannot fast without detriment to their health. Those thus exempted from the fast are not restricted in the use of meat on days when it is allowed by dispensation at the principal meal. Those who are obliged to fast are allowed only one full meal a day which ordinarily should not be taken before noon, and to a collation not exceeding the fourth part of an ordinary meal in the evening, though a small piece of bread with a warm drink such as tea, coffee or

chocolate is allowed in the morning. Abstinence from flesh-meat is dispensed with in this country on all Sundays, at the principal meal on all other days of Lent, except Wednesdays and Fridays, and except the Saturdays of Ember week and holy week. By a special Indult of 1895, working men and their families are permitted to use flesh-meat once a day on all fast days and abstinence days of the year, except Fridays, Ash-Wednesday, Wednesday and Saturday of holy week and the vigil of Christmas. This privilege in favor of working men and their families extended for ten years, but in most places it has been renewed. Those who avail themselves of the dispensation are earnestly requested by the Holy See to perform some other act of mortification, such as abstaining from intoxicating liquors.

The use of fish and flesh is not allowed at the same meal even on Sunday in Lent, or even by working men and their families who take advantage of the Indult of 1895. Lard, the fat rendered from any kind of meat, may be used in preparing food on all days of fast and abstinence in Lent and throughout the year.

EMBER DAYS.

Ember days are the Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays of the week coming immediately after, 1. the first Sunday of Lent; 2. Whit-Sunday; 3. the fourteenth of September; 4. and the third Sunday of Advent. As may be seen they correspond in a way to

the four seasons of the year; that is, spring, summer, autumn and winter. The weeks in which the Ember days occur are called Ember weeks.

They are called in the Liturgy, *Quatuor Tempora* (four times), because they occur four times a year. The origin of the English word "ember," used in this connection, is not quite clear. It may come from the Anglo-Saxon word "ymbren," meaning a circuit, used possibly to designate the circuit of the seasons, or it may be a corruption of the Latin words, or as some try to prove, it may have sprung from the ancient custom of eating nothing on these days until night, and then only a small cake which was baked under the embers. This cake was called ember bread.

These days were instituted for the purpose of beginning the different seasons with prayer and penance, of asking God to preserve the fruits of the earth and thanking him for their abundance. Coming about the beginning or end of the seasons of the year they suggest an appropriate opportunity for praise and thanks to the Author of every best gift. We are indebted to divine providence for everything we possess. God has so created the world and framed natural laws that the earth brings forth fruit in richness, and affords a plentiful harvest for our wants and necessities. We must not be so presumptive as to think that the seed sprouts forth and the grain ripens at our bidding. True, we must co-operate with the designs of God. We must cultivate the soil and sow the seed and reap the harvest, but God gives the increase. St. Paul says: "Neither he that planteth is anything, nor he that watereth; but

God that giveth the increase." The custom, therefore, of giving thanks to God for the abundance of the things that nature produces is a most salutary one.

The Ember days were also instituted in connection with the ordination of priests and other ministers, which generally takes place during them, though they may be ordained at other times. The idea is that the whole Church is in prayer while Holy Orders are being conferred upon the priests and other ministers of God.

They are days of fast and abstinence, of prayer and thanksgiving. We should endeavor to enter into the spirit and carry out the purpose for which they were instituted. We should certainly fast and abstain. It would, moreover, be greatly in harmony with the spirit of the time to say the Litany of the Saints or some other appropriate prayers in thanksgiving to the divine bounty. As the whole Church is praying for those who are being ordained on these days, so we should also pray for them. We can go to Mass or receive Communion or say the Litanies for them.

According to the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore, children who have not made their first Communion and have attained the use of reason, should go to confession during each of the ember weeks, or four times a year. Parents should see that their children comply with this regulation.

ROGATION DAYS.

The Rogation days are the Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday immediately preceding the feast of the Ascension of our Lord. Rogation means prayer or supplication, and is the Latin equivalent of the Greek word litany. They are not holy days of obligation, nor are they days of fast or abstinence. The Litany of the Saints is chanted in procession. They were instituted for the purpose of asking God to bless and increase the fruits of the earth, as well as of appeasing His anger, begging pardon for our sins and praying for other spiritual and temporal favors.

It is a beautiful and significant custom to beseech God to bless the fruits of the earth and cause them to come forth in abundance. The season of the year and the ever benign influence of God makes such prayers most appropriate. It is spring-time, and nature is beginning the work of supplying man with the necessities of life. Back of nature is God, whose creation it is. His hand is seen in the production of every flower that blooms and every blade of grass that grows. At His bidding the showers moisten, the air invigorates, the sunshine warms and the soil brings forth. If He so willed it, the earth would be dry, parched and barren. Man is obliged to sow, cultivate and reap, but, as St. Paul says, "God gives the increase."

It is, therefore, an excellent custom to have a time set aside for the purpose of begging God to bless and supply in abundance these products of nature which are absolutely necessary for our existence.

If the Litany is chanted publicly in the church, we should endeavor to be present, so that we may be permeated with the spirit which these days suggest, and pray for the objects for which they were instituted.

ADVENT.

Advent is a period of about four weeks immediately preceding Christmas. It contains four Sundays and begins on the Sunday nearest the feast of St. Andrew. It is a time of fast and prayer, preparatory to the worthy celebration of the great feast of Christmas. In the early ages of the Church the law of fast was quite as strict during Advent as in Lent, and in some countries of the old world the law is still more or less in force. In this country there is no special law either of fast or abstinence. The universal custom, encouraged and fostered by the Church, is to forego as far as possible all worldly pleasures and amusements, to give more attention than usual to divine and spiritual things, and be more recollected, more prayerful and more penitential. Frequently in parish churches there are special services during Advent, often sermons on certain evenings or the stations of the Cross on Friday evening, and these, if possible, should be attended.

As Christmas approaches we should make ready for a good confession, preparing ourselves for it well in advance, and on the happy morning of Christmas should

receive our blessed Lord in Holy Communion with clean hearts and pure minds.

The first Sunday of Advent is the beginning of the ecclesiastical year, as New Year's day is the beginning of the civil year. In the gospel of this Sunday and of the preceding Sunday, that is, on the first and last Sundays of the religious year, the Church calls our attention to the last or general judgment. She thereby wishes to convey the idea that God's judgments and our final destiny should be the first things in the mind and the last out.

Solemn marriages are forbidden during Advent. If they take place at all, the ceremony must be private. By private is not meant clandestinely, but without pomp, display and the nuptial blessing.

CHRISTMAS.

Christmas commemorates the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ. It is called "Christmas" because when England was Catholic, it was customary to attach the word "mass" to the name of a holy day, on which there was an obligation to hear Mass. In time it was spelled with one "s.". Hence, we have Christmas, Michaelmas, Candlemas, etc., to signify that attendance at the Holy Sacrifice was necessary on the Nativity of Christ, the feast of St. Michael and the blessing of the candles.

The birth of our Lord was the most momentous event that ever occurred on earth. He was the prom-

ised Messiah, the second person of the Blessed Trinity, true God and true Man, who, through the power of the Holy Ghost, assumed human flesh to redeem the world. He was born of a Virgin Mother in a stable in Bethlehem, nearly two thousand years ago. He redeemed and saved the human race, and, moreover, established a religion which enables man to become pleasing to God and leads him to the highest degree of human worth. He paid the penalty with His life. He was crucified, dead and buried, but arose from the grave on the third day.

No person has done the world so much good as Jesus Christ. Ancient history led up to His coming, and modern history flows from His coming. Indeed, He is the central figure of the universe. No wonder that the custom of celebrating His birth with joy and enthusiasm is prevalent among Christians.

LENT.

Lent is the penitential season in the Catholic Church. The word is derived from the Anglo-Saxon "lencten," which means spring, though there is authority for its derivation from "lencgan," to lengthen, because the days grow longer at this time. It is known in the Liturgy as Quadragesima, which is the Latin word for forty, meaning the forty days' fast which takes place before Easter. It begins on Ash-Wednesday and lasts until Easter Sunday. The forty days, Sundays excluded,

which are not a part of Lent, commemorate the forty days' fast of our Lord.

He did not, however, institute Lent; neither did He order His followers to fast, though He did prescribe rules for fasting and on one occasion He said His disciples would fast when the Bridegroom, meaning Himself, would be taken away from them. It is, therefore, a purely ecclesiastical institution, but so thoroughly in harmony with the spirit of Christianity as to be inseparable from it.

Like so many other customs of the Church, its origin cannot be traced. It is certainly very old, probably dating back to the time of the Apostles. Early ecclesiastical writers refer to it as in existence for generations, and consequently as a well established fact. St. Ireneus, in the second century, speaks of it as no new thing, but had arisen "long before in a past generation." This would seem to indicate that it was known to the Apostles or at least to the generations immediately succeeding them.

The Church has enacted various laws and regulations governing the Lenten practices. In doing so she has no idea of injuring one's health. Her sole desire is to induce her children to do penance and bring the physical being under the control of the spiritual by discipline and proper management. These effects are forcibly expressed in the preface of the Mass for the penitential season, namely, "fasting restrains vice, elevates the mind and brings virtue and reward."

Lent is not merely a time for fasting and abstaining, in the strict sense of these terms, but it is also a season

of prayer, penance and refraining from worldly pleasures that may at other times be permitted. Hence special religious services are held twice or three times a week in most churches. There is no excuse for non-attendance at these exercises. It only requires a will to be present. All forms of amusements, receptions and the like are entirely out of place. Instead of worldly enjoyment it should be the earnest effort of every Catholic to be diligent in praying, eradicating vice and cultivating the different forms of virtue.

It is improper during Lent to attend balls or parties, the theatre or other places of amusement. These things are distractions to the spiritual minded and are to be avoided. In many families even the simple pastimes of children are set aside. Besides one's regular devotions, it is good to have some particular devotion at this time, and to be unusually solicitous about performing works of self-denial and penance. This is the time to forgive your enemies, to do good to those who hate you, and to pray for those who persecute you. It is the time to seek out the poor and show special kindness to them. At this time we should exercise more self-restraint than usual; we should be more patient and gentle, less given to anger, and should bear our troubles with calmness and resignation. And the reward will be great. It will result in making the soul better, nobler, purer and more in harmony with the higher life.

HOLY WEEK.

Holy week is the week immediately preceding Easter Sunday, and is commemorative of the passion and death of our Lord. Though it includes the whole week, it is commonly understood to refer to the three last days of it, namely, Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday. These are memorable days in the Christian world. They remind us of the different movements of our Lord during His last moments on earth. Though not holy days of obligation, they are days of great devotion. They begin with the scene in the chamber where He instituted the Holy Eucharist, continue through the harrowing events that led up to Calvary, and end with the alleluias that follow His resurrection from the grave. Each has, therefore, a significance of its own. The ceremonies are elaborate and have a meaning which expresses the nature of the events they are intended to represent.

Only one Mass can be said in each church on each of these three days. In some churches where there are a sufficient number of the clergy present, the "Tenebrae," which is the name given to the matins and lauds of the following day, is publicly sung in the afternoon or evening of Wednesday, Thursday and Friday of this week.

HOLY THURSDAY.

Our Lord instituted the Holy Eucharist on Holy Thursday, which is expressive of His intense love for man. The Mass said on this day is an expression of joy and gratitude for the institution of the Blessed Sacrament, though its solemn commemoration is deferred till the feast of Corpus Christi. It is too close to the sorrowful passion and death of our Lord to be a time of joy, and hence another occasion has been selected for a more befitting celebration. For the Mass on this day the altar is decorated with the very best. The bells are rung at the Gloria and are not sounded again till Holy Saturday, neither is any musical instrument played during that time in honor of our Lord's silence and to express sorrow and mourning. The faithful should endeavor to receive Holy Communion, and it is most becoming to do so.

At this Mass two Hosts are consecrated. One of them is consumed at the priest's Communion; the other is placed in a chalice, and at the end of Mass is carried in procession to the chapel or side altar, which must be handsomely decorated with flowers and brightly illuminated with lights. This chapel or side altar is called the Repository. The people are generally requested to donate flowers for its decoration. The procession with us generally goes through the aisles of the church, and every one should be kneeling in adoration. This should be borne in mind by those who make it a practice to stand around the doors or in the passage ways. The Sacred Host remains in the Repository until the follow-

ing day for the adoration, praise and thanksgiving of the faithful. A plenary indulgence may be gained by those who visit the Repository and spend some time in prayer, upon the usual conditions of confession and Communion, though the latter may be made either on Holy Thursday or Easter Sunday. A partial indulgence of ten years and ten quarantines may be gained for every visit to the Repository, as directed above, with a firm purpose of going to confession.

At the close of the services, the Blessed Sacrament is removed from the main altar, when it is then stripped of every form of ornament, to represent the desolation of Jesus in His passion. In cathedral churches, the bishop consecrates on this day the holy oils used throughout the year.

GOOD FRIDAY.

Good Friday commemorates Jesus Christ crucified. The Mass of the "Presanctified" is celebrated. The word "Presanctified" is used to indicate that the Sacred Host was consecrated the day before, being the same that was placed in the Repository on Holy Thursday and carried in procession from there during the services of Good Friday. The consecration and other important parts of this Mass are omitted. An account of the passion is read or sung, prayers are offered up for all classes to show that none are excluded from the redemption of Christ, and the Cross, the symbol of redemption,

is venerated by being kissed. The ministers then go to the Repository and carry the Sacred Host in procession through the aisles of the church to the main altar. Again every one should be kneeling in adoration. The services are concluded by the celebrant's Communion.

The bells are not rung during the whole day, nor is any musical instrument sounded, to indicate universal mourning. The people are not allowed to receive Holy Communion on Good Friday. As it is a day of great devotion, though not a holy day of obligation, it should be spent as piously as possible. It is an excellent custom to attend Mass, to be present at the exercises held in the church, to venerate the Cross, and make the Stations of the Cross.

HOLY SATURDAY.

Holy Saturday commemorates our Lord in the sepulchre. The services begin with the blessing of new fire at the church door. From this fire the triple candle is lighted, emblematic of the light of Christ; and from this in turn are lighted the paschal candle, symbolical of the Resurrection, and finally all the lights in the church. The prophecies being read, the blessing of the baptismal font or water follows. Before the oils are poured into the baptismal water, a portion is reserved and this is called the "Easter water." The litanies are then chanted, and Mass is celebrated on the main altar. At the Gloria, the bells are rung, the organ peals forth

its sacred melody and the triumphant notes of the "Alleluia" re-echo throughout the church. Jesus Christ crucified, dead and buried has arisen!

Why are the alleluias heard on Holy Saturday or the day before the Resurrection? In the early days of Christianity, there was no Mass on Holy Saturday. It was said at midnight of this day or the first hour of Easter Sunday. It became customary, however, to celebrate it on Saturday morning instead of at midnight, and the custom finally became universal. Hence, its joyous character and the alleluias announcing the Resurrection before Easter Sunday. The hour of the Mass was changed, but its triumphant character remained as before.

EASTER.

Easter Sunday commemorates the glorious Resurrection of our Lord from the dead. In the Liturgy it is called *Dominica Resurrectionis* (Sunday of the Resurrection) or the Pasch. The English term of "Easter" is derived from the Anglo-Saxon word *Eastre*, which was the name of the Pagan goddess of dawn. Festivities in her honor were held in the springtime or the dawn of summer, and it was natural that the word should in time be associated with the great Christian festival coming at that season of the year. It is a movable feast and comes on the first Sunday after the first full moon after the vernal equinox, provided such full moon does not

occur earlier than March 21, and as it cannot occur later than April 18th, Easter cannot be earlier than March 22nd nor later than April 25th.

Easter is the day of days in the Christian calendar. It proclaims in most emphatic language the divinity of Jesus, and upon His divinity rests His cause. This accounts for the devotion and enthusiasm that center around the tomb as the stone is rolled away, and the glories of the risen Lord are flashed upon the world. It becomes a vortex around which circles the adoration of millions and millions of devout souls. It becomes a sacred shrine at which Christians are electrified with faith, permeated with hope, fortified with courage and made fearless in the face of the whole world and of whatever befalls them. The Resurrection of our Lord brings a stronger hope of a new life, a firmer conviction of immortality, a more ardent desire to arise from the death of sin to a life of virtue. This festival speaks of hope, of immortality, of death to sin and life to virtue.

These were the effects produced on the Apostles and holy women. They are produced in the hearts of every Christian to this present day.

OTHER IMPORTANT FEASTS.

Other important festivals in the ecclesiastical year are: The Circumcision of our Lord, Epiphany, the Ascension of our Lord, Pentecost, Corpus Christi, the

Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, All Saints, All Souls and the Immaculate Conception.

The Circumcision celebrates the memory of the blood shed by our Lord when He submitted Himself to the Mosaic rite of circumcision. It occurs on January 1, or New Year's day, and hence the beginning of the civil year. It is a holy day of obligation.

The Epiphany celebrates the memory of the adoration of the Magi, the Baptism of Jesus Christ, and the miracle of changing water into wine at the marriage of Cana. It occurs on January 6.

The Ascension celebrates the mystery of our Lord's ascending into Heaven. It is generally called "Ascension Thursday," and occurs forty days after Easter. It is a holy day of obligation.

Pentecost celebrates the mystery of the coming of the Holy Ghost, the third Person of the Blessed Trinity, upon the Apostles and other disciples of our Lord and upon the Church. It means fifty, because it occurs fifty days after Easter. It is also called "Whit-Sunday," because it falls on Sunday and those who were baptized in the evening before this festival were dressed in white. The Holy Ghost remains with the Church and guides her in the way of holiness and truth.

Corpus Christi is the solemn commemoration of the institution of the Holy Eucharist. This mystery of God's love and goodness is also celebrated on Holy Thursday, but that day comes so close to the sorrowful Passion that the Church prefers to defer its solemn celebration to another time, namely, Corpus Christi.

The Assumption celebrates the death and taking up

of the body and soul of the Blessed Virgin into Heaven. It falls on August 15, and is a holy day of obligation. While Catholics generally believe that she was taken up into Heaven, it is not an article of faith.

All Saints recalls the memory of the saints in Heaven—those who fought the good fight and are as a consequence enjoying everlasting felicity. This feast gives us a special occasion to honor the true servants of God, to teach us to pray to them and to induce us to imitate their virtues and follow their example. They are heroes—the only heroes of the world. They are the only models worth imitating, the only guides worth following. They lead to the best and noblest and holiest. This feast occurs on November 1, and is a holy day of obligation.

All Souls commemorates all the faithful departed, who are in Purgatory. It falls on November 2. (See Purgatory).

The Immaculate Conception celebrates the mystery of the Blessed Virgin's exemption from original sin from the very first instant of her conception. It falls on December 8, and is a holy day of obligation. That Mary was, by a singular privilege of Almighty God and through the merits of her divine Son, preserved free from original sin from the first instant of her conception is an article of faith and must be believed by Catholics.

THE JUDGMENTS OF GOD.

We cannot overestimate the influence of the thought that we will be judged by God, and our eternal happiness shall depend upon the result. Every act we do, every word we utter, every thought we entertain shall ultimately be measured by the standard of divine justice and our condition in the hereafter shall be determined by this severe test. Our faith plainly teaches that it shall be rendered to every one absolutely according to his works. Nothing is more salutary, therefore, than to reflect upon the judgments of God. "Remember thy last end, and thou shall never sin."

There will be two judgments,—one immediately after death, called the particular or private judgment, and the other on the last day, called the general or public judgment. The moment life departs, the soul will appear in the presence of God and will be judged. Theologians tell us that this judgment consists of an illumination of the soul, so that it knows its own condition before God and the reward or punishment it deserves. Instantly the past is open, and instantly the soul finds its way to its place in Heaven, Hell or Purgatory as a body finds its place to earth by the law of gravitation. It is all over in a second, but what tremendous results follow!

A general judgment shall be publicly passed upon every individual of the human race on the last day. The Scriptures say that our Lord shall judge and pronounce sentence on this occasion, and they mention some of the attendant circumstances. Our Lord fore-

tells some of the things that will take place on or near the last day. He is emphatic in calling attention to the disasters in the world, the distress of peoples, the disorders in the heavens, and the appalling destruction of the universe by fire. When that time will come no one knows. These circumstances are of such a nature as to strike terror into human hearts, but no doubt God has been pleased to reveal them to impart a wholesome fear for the consequences of sin.

The teachings of science seems to corroborate the words of the Scripture in reference to the destruction of the universe by fire. Science points to a beginning of the present order of things or to a time when the energy of matter was so intense that it could not have been derived from any previous, natural distribution, and to an end or a time when the same energy shall be so diffused as to be powerless to act on matter. When the world was formed its intense energy gave rise to a reign of fire, the likes of which is beyond the imagination to describe. The globe we inhabit was a mass of burning liquids, seething and foaming in wild rage. If the universe assumed form by the impartation of energy as the top is set in motion and a reign of fire followed, it is certain, from a scientific standpoint, that if another impartation of energy be given it or if the forces of nature be gathered together, the result will be another reign of fire, whereby this world "being melted with fervent heat may renew its youth in the fresh and heavenly loveliness of a new heaven and earth." Does this not sound wonderfully like the words of the inspired writers? St. Peter says: "Looking for and hasting

unto the coming of the day of the Lord, by which the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with the burning heat."

On that last day our divine Savior will come to judge mankind. Every soul united to its resurrected body shall appear before Him,—the good at His right and the bad at His left,—and in the presence of all men and the court of Heaven, shall hear the sentence by which it must abide throughout eternity. To the good at His right He will say: "Come, ye blessed of My Father, possess you the kingdom prepared for you from the foundations of the world;" and to the bad at His left: "Depart from Me, you cursed, into everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels." It is most significant that our Lord has revealed the very words He will use in passing judgment on the last day. Remember them and you will lead a better, holier, saintlier life.

HEAVEN.

Heaven is a state in which the just see God and enjoy everlasting happiness. The Church teaches that there is such a state, that its duration is eternal, and that souls who are "undefiled" either at the moment of death or become so through purification after death, shall dwell there forever. Heaven is our true home, the goal of all our striving, the reward of all our labors, the satisfaction of all our desires, the fulfillment of all

our love, the realization of all our hopes and aspirations. No words can adequately express nor imagination picture what it really is. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered in the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love Him."

There are two kinds of happiness in Heaven,—the essential and the accidental. The former is seeing God as He is. This is called the Beatific Vision. The just see God clearly "face to face" and are admitted to a "sort of union" with Him. They possess God and are "made partakers of the divine nature." The result is that they "assume a certain admirable, almost divine form so as to seem more like gods than human beings." While all see God clearly, all do not see Him with equal clearness, and this fact makes degrees of bliss in Heaven. None will be able to fully comprehend God, as His comprehension is beyond the range of human intelligence.

The Beatific Vision is so enrapturing that it constitutes the supreme happiness of Heaven, and the loss of it the severest pain of Hell. A natural reference may give us the faintest conception of its meaning. If we love an object and desire its possession, we are not satisfied until we get it. This desire is in proportion to our love, and the love in proportion to the goodness of the object as we see it. God is goodness multiplied infinitely and although, after seeing Him, the desire to possess Him cannot become infinite, but it can and will become as intense as human nature is capable of. It would, therefore, be anguish unspeakable, as St. Catharine says, to lose the sight of God.

To the essential happiness which follows from the

vision of the divine essence, are added certain gifts which constitute the soul's accidental happiness. These appeal to us most powerfully, because they are in a degree experienced in this life. The Apostle refers to them when he says: "Glory and honor and peace to every one that worketh good."

The just will be glorified in the fulness of knowledge, wisdom and truth. They will be honored by being raised to the dignity of friends and sons of God, by taking possession of His kingdom, and being praised by Christ before His Father and the assembled hosts. Their minds will be "overflowing" with intellectual delight and their hearts will experience the sweetness of ineffable joy. They will have perfect peace and rest in the consciousness of possessing God and reaching their final destiny.

The body after the general resurrection, will be spiritualized and united to the soul. Freed from all the infirmities that afflict humanity, it will put on immortality and partake of the happiness to which its merits entitle it. It will become "bright as the sun" with glory, will be incapable of suffering, will have the power of penetrating material substances, and of moving with the utmost facility and swiftness wherever the soul desires.

Heaven also means the company of the angels and saints of God. We may not be able to grasp the meaning of an angelic presence, but we do know something about saintly souls. They are God's heroes, the builders of His kingdom among us, the upholders of the noblest and best. We can understand what it is to be with the

good and the holy and the pure, the meek and the humble and the considerate, the charitable and the kind and the unselfish, the temperate and the honest and the just. We know what it is to live with them. We have seen them in the present and heard of them in the ages that are passed. They have enlightened the world and made it better. They fought for and won "the crown of imperishable glory." We will be with them in Heaven and feel the everlasting influence of their holy presence.

Heaven is the reward of saintly conduct. A little space of time, called life, has been given you to secure it. It is only a little while and you cannot afford to lose a single moment. You must work for it with all the powers of mind and heart and soul. Soon the time will come when you cannot work. "A whole eternity waited for thee to be born; now a whole eternity waits to see what thou shalt do with thyself when thou art born." As far as meriting Heaven is concerned, "all the countless ages that roll throughout the two eternities are blackest night." Work while it is day-time that you may be worthy to dwell in the mansions of eternal bliss.

HELL.

God will reward the just with everlasting happiness and will inflict everlasting punishment upon the wicked. Every sin calls for some kind of retribution either here or hereafter. It frequently happens that there is no

retribution made in this life for the countless moral transgressions of man, and in many instances the wicked prosper and are enriched with worldly success. God in His infinite wisdom, which no human intelligence can comprehend, allows them, if they will, to take their poor reward in this life, but reserves for the next the infliction of the severest punishment upon every one of their evil thoughts, words and deeds.

To allow the wicked to succeed and triumph by ruthlessly trampling upon every law, human and divine, by forcibly appropriating to themselves things to which they have no right, or by wantonly outraging feelings that are everywhere held as sacred, would be an injustice out of all harmony with the nature of God. There is and must be a Hell, and Hell is right.

There are many passages in the Sacred Scriptures that explicitly state there is such a place. It is referred to as the bottomless pit (Gehenna), as a furnace of unquenchable fire, as an abode out of which there is no redemption and in which souls are in dreadful torments. Our Savior says that those who have not on the wedding garment (the robes of sanctifying grace) when the Bridegroom comes will be cast into exterior darkness where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth; and God has seen fit to reveal the very words of the sentence which His divine Son, as Judge, shall pronounce upon the wicked on the last day: "Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels."

The Church has not defined the nature of the sufferings of the damned, nor how they will be inflicted, but

theologians are unanimous in teaching the following points: Hell exists; souls departing this life in a state of mortal guilt go there immediately; and out of it there is no redemption. They also teach that these souls experience two kinds of sufferings, the pain of loss and the pain of sense. The pain of loss is the agonizing thought of losing the sight of God or the Beatific Vision. What this means is more fully explained in the articles on Heaven and Purgatory. The pain of sense will be inflicted chiefly by fire, "prepared for the devil and his angels." The Church has not defined the nature of this fire, nor what its properties are, nor to what it is like, but theologians teach that it will have the quality of affecting bodies and spirits. After the general resurrection, the body will be united to the soul and will partake of its sufferings. The punishment of the damned will not diminish with the lapse of time, but will go on forever and ever.

Such is Hell, and there is nothing which strikes more fear into human hearts,—not that fear which crushes hope or stifles effort or breeds despair, but which arouses to action. Were there no fear of bodily injury there would be no precautions for safety. In every path of life fear is an essential element of success, and in the work of eternal salvation, it is the "beginning of wisdom." An idea of God's chastisement ever so vague will stop the sinner in his headlong course; it will drive him into the sanctuary of religion, yea, to the feet of God with prayers upon his lips for grace and help and guidance to live a better life; it will arouse the lukewarm from their lethargy and infuse into their souls

new activity for the coveted prize beyond the grave; it will spur on the good to greater sacrifices and make them account no efforts too costly to reach a high state of perfection.

In the light of God's judgments, we can understand how sin is the only evil in the world, and its punishment is the only danger to be dreaded by the human race. It is the only danger which Christ ever admitted to be real. He said: "Fear ye not them that kill the body and are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him that can destroy both body and soul into Hell." So great is the danger of incurring God's eternal enmity that our Lord went so far as to counsel the severest bodily sacrifices, if that moral transgression which kills the soul cannot be escaped in any other way.

No conditions, therefore, are too hard, no precautions too wise, no obligations too burdensome to insure a course of conduct that will prevent us from falling into the hands of an avenging God. It is better to suffer any loss in this life rather than even run the risk of such a dreadful fate. Remember thy last end, and pray daily and hourly to God for grace to lead a holy life that your reward may be great in the world to come.

PURGATORY.

Purgatory is a state in the future life in which souls who are free from mortal sin, but not free from venial sin, or not having fully satisfied for the temporal pun-

ishment due those sins whose guilt has been forgiven, are detained until they are cleansed and made "undefiled," when they will be admitted into Heaven. To know that God in His great mercy has provided a place of purification for those who are not sinless imparts the greatest consolation. It gives hope, and fortifies the heart with courage to strive for the realization of the promises of God.

The Sacred Scriptures undoubtedly refer to Purgatory. Our Savior in the Sermon on the Mount, speaking of a prison in the world to come, said: "Amen, I say to thee, thou shalt not go out from thence till thou repay the last farthing." (Matt. v:26). It is evident from this passage that there must be a place of temporary confinement, whence the soul is released after all debt due to sin is paid. At another time, speaking of blasphemy, he said: "He that shall speak against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, nor in the world to come." We know from this passage that some sins are forgiven in the world to come. They cannot be forgiven in Hell, for "out of Hell there is no redemption," nor can they be forgiven in Heaven, for there is no sin in that state of blessedness. Between the two extremes, there is only a middle state or place left. St. Paul says: "He himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire." The inspired writers of old state that "it is a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead." If the dead are among the lost there is no need for prayers. They would be as idle and useless as shadows cast upon the earth. If they are among the blessed, prayers would

not add the faintest ray of brightness to the halo of their glory.

These texts tell us that there is a place in the future life where the "last farthing" or temporal debt due to sin is paid, where some sins are forgiven, where the soul is saved or cleansed "yet so as by fire," where prayers are useful, and where the confinement is temporary. None of these passages can refer to a soul either in Heaven or in Hell. There is only a middle state left, where those who do not die in God's enmity, but are not morally spotless, suffer for a time and are rendered fit to enjoy everlasting happiness.

The Church has not defined the nature of the purgatorial sufferings, nor has she made any comparison between them and the pains experienced on earth. She has not stated what they are, nor to what they are like. We believe that most spiritual writers uphold the ideas of St. Catherine of Genoa in reference to the condition of the souls in Purgatory. Faber champions her ideas in the strongest manner. St. Catherine wrote a treatise on this subject which the Sorbonne called "a rare effusion of the spirit of God upon a pure and loving soul," and after being examined during the course of the saint's beatification was pronounced "incontaminate, most salutary and altogether seraphic."

She holds that the severest pain is that of loss, but she does not deny the existence of intense pains of sense. The latter, however, are to a large extent mitigated or lost sight of in the abundance of love and charity, peace and joy, content and security which flood the soul. She holds that as soon as life departs the soul flashes into the

presence of its God, is instantly judged, and immediately wings its voluntary flight to the place assigned for it in Purgatory. At the moment of judgment the beams of God's searching light illumine the past, reveal every sin that person ever committed, and expose the evil consequences which now keep it from its last end. These evil consequences are the ligaments that hold it down and keep it back. The saint calls them the rust of the soul. As the past is opened the soul perceives the hindrances that keep it from its God, and knows at once that Purgatory will do away with them; and hence it willingly and gladly throws itself into it.

During the whole process of purgation the first ravishing sight of God's presence, His light and radiance and beauty of expression remain with it, consoling it, buoying it up with hope, and filling it with love. These feelings are uppermost and foremost to such a degree as to almost put in the back ground the pain of sense; but tend to make the pain of loss more severe. St. Catherine says it is pain unspeakable to be separated for a moment from Him whose being fills the heavens and the earth, whose sight floods the soul with ecstasy, whose look breathes hope and love and joy. No sooner does the soul understand that it is saved, is acceptable to God, a friend of His, an heir of Paradise, than it has a bitter longing to be with the object of its hope. But it understands there is an impediment holding it back, that is, the remains of sin, which it perceives can be only purged away in Purgatory. Hence it is perfectly content to remain there until the impediment (remains of sin) disappears, or the rust is eaten away.

It experiences two sufferings—the extremity of pain which must result in eating away the rust (or remains of sin) which covers it, and the extremity of eager desire to be with God. The latter is called the pain of loss—a pain so extreme that no tongue can tell it, no understanding grasp the least portion of it. The soul undergoing the former (pain of sense) is compared to gold in the crucible. “Gold,” says the saint, “when it is purified to twenty-four carats, will not waste away any more, no matter how much fire is applied to it, because in reality nothing is consumed but imperfections. The divine fire (used in the Scriptural sense) acts in like manner upon the soul. God holds it in this fire till every imperfection is consumed, and until He reduces it to the purity of twenty-four carats; every soul, however, according to its own degree. When the soul is thus purified it rests altogether in God. God is its life. And when He has brought it to Himself thus purified, it becomes impassable (cannot suffer), for there is nothing left in it to consume away. If it were still left in the fire it would give it no pain—nay, it would then be the fire of Divine Love—Eternal Life.”

OUR DUTY TO THE DEAD.

While undergoing the process of purification the souls in Purgatory are powerless and can do nothing to better themselves. The evil legacies of sin are balanced only by satisfying the divine justice. Such satisfaction

is made only by meriting. But there is no meriting, no meritorious action in the world to come. We merit only in this life. Hence they can do absolutely nothing to better their own condition.

But we can help them. We can do so, first, by prayer; secondly, by good works of every kind, provided they are offered up for that purpose; thirdly, by gaining these indulgences for them that the Church has permitted by way of suffrage to be applied to them; and lastly by the holy Sacrifice of the Mass. The latter is of infinite value, and although no one can receive its benefits in their fullness, each can receive his portion according to his capacity and the will of God.

We should not, therefore, forget the dead. It is natural for us to extend to them every assistance in our power. Instinctively their images come into the minds and we almost see them standing before us. Let us pause for a moment to look at these faces of the dead. Their number is very great. It is a multitude which no one can count. It is a vast, countless throng. Now some of these faces, kind reader, I am sure you know. There is one in particular, possibly two or three, which stand out more distinct and clear than the others. It is now so many years, long, long years, since you saw these faces in the agony of death. You need not try, you cannot forget their last days on earth. They were sad, dark days to you. You remember the very moment they died, and their very last words. You remember when they were lowered into the grave, and how you were thrilled with an unspeakable horror of loneliness and separation. Your hearts seemed crushed under a

great heavy load which was to press upon it forever. That was a long time ago, and I know that you have changed since then. You have grown older, and formed new attachments, and as the years advanced you have become different from what you were.

The anchor of love is death. Dead hearts do not forsake us. Now look at your own heart. Has it changed toward them? Have you sometimes forgotten them, and let long periods of time run by without a single thought of them entering your mind? They ask you why you have forsaken them. They recall the long years spent together and the sweet, pure love that ebbed and flowed between you; and they ask, why you are so cold and indifferent now? You have no answer to make; you are silent! A great gulf seems to be between us and the dead—a gulf that seems to widen and deepen as the years pass by. Have the dead wandered from us? No; it is we who have wandered from them. This is a sad reflection and arouses in us a sense of shame, a feeling of inconstancy, and therefore, of dishonor. Can it be that we have betrayed the dead? The test of our loyalty to them is the prayers we offer up in their behalf. While they are in Purgatory they cannot help themselves, but they may be aided by our intercession, our good works, the holy Sacrifice.

We do not know how long they suffer or how great their sufferings are, but we are confident they are very long and very great. The time may be a little while, or it may be long, long years, even ages. The time must naturally seem very long. These souls are anxiously awaiting the end of their sorrow; and it is within

our power to assist them. They see Heaven before them, and they long to enter into its blessedness. They see God before them, and it is anguish unspeakable to be separated from Him. If you were out on a storm-tossed sea, and your boat crippled, and the angry waves threatening every moment to engulf you; if this went on for many weeks till finally provisions failed, and the gaunt form of famine came walking like a demon on the face of the deep; and then in your distress you saw a little speck away off on the horizon; every eye is turned toward it in breathless hope; it grows larger and now it stands up like a lone pillar against the deep blue sky, and anon the sunlight clothes it in living white, and then you see it is a sail sweeping toward you before the gale like an angel from Heaven; would you not then rejoice? You would weep for very joy. Well, the souls in Purgatory are looking out for that sail, that angel, that messenger from God, sent to bring them out of sorrow into everlasting happiness and eternal life. We can hasten that angel's coming; we can speed him on his journey. We can do it by our prayers and intercessions.

OUR DUTY TO OURSELVES.

To know our religion and be acquainted with its customs and practices will be of little benefit to us unless we put our knowledge to practical account. In other words, we should practice our religion. In practicing it, living it, acting it, we acquire holiness or sanctity which is the ultimate object of all religious observances.

The conditions that everywhere prevail make it clear that the truest and best are found in living for God and keeping His commandments. It is best to be virtuous and to do what is right. Evil does not pay or make good its promises. Moral transgression exacts severe penalties sooner or later. Experience proves that the wages of sin is death,—death not only to the soul, but to the greatest things of earth. It kills peace, and happiness, and health, and hope, and opportunity. And the same experience proves that the wages of virtue is life,—long life and the best the world can give. It brings peace, and happiness, and health, and hope, and opportunity, and the consciousness of doing our duty.

They are working against their own interests who do not look carefully after the affairs of the soul, or who do not act in such a manner as to please God and save their souls. It is true we can do nothing without God's help, but that help is assured. This being certain, it rests entirely with ourselves to practice our holy religion and discharge the sacred obligations of life in such a manner as to ensure that worth of character which only a virtuous life can bring. If life has any meaning it is in view of the world to come; if the

soul has any value, it is because it is intended to enjoy God; if virtue has any worth, it is to fit the soul for endless joy. To make our religion part of our lives is a duty we owe ourselves.

By living our religion we become saintly. By living up to its requirements we become saints, and we must become saints, otherwise we will miss the purpose of life. Sanctity may seem so far above our reach that it is useless to strive for it. That is not true. It is not that which the few may hope to secure. It is within the reach of every one. An ordinary effort is all that is necessary to attain at least a degree of sanctity. A very few of the few extraordinary souls of earth shone with such holiness as to be entitled to a place on the calendar of saints. There are millions of human souls in Heaven to-day whose names shall never appear on any list made by human hands. Lead good, holy lives; practice your religion faithfully and serve God well, and you will be numbered among them.

We might specify here in very general terms some particulars. Be loyal to God and God's Church. You cannot love God and hate His Church. Love God as your Father and all men as your brothers. Resist evil-doing with earnestness. The sinner is most out of place in the great family of God. We should strive to lead sinless lives and bend our efforts to the acquisition of virtue. We are not what we should be unless we are at least in a degree meek and humble, honest and truthful, pure and temperate, charitable and unselfish, sympathetic and considerate. These soon become habits, and when they become habits, they impart a value and

worth that are inestimable. They are the only things that have personal value and worth. Life will not be beautiful without the profusion of their wealth.

Catholics should be most punctual about attending Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation. Every priest can testify that absence from Mass is the primary cause of thousands wandering away from God. Attendance brings them in touch with religious influences, while non-attendance engenders an irreligious disposition. To attend the other services in the church does not bind under the pain of sin, still we should endeavor to be present at all the important services, as they are a part of the great work of the salvation of our soul.

We should be devoted to prayer. No one can disbelieve in prayer and believe in Jesus Christ. We cannot be His followers unless we are permeated with the spirit of prayer. It is a fundamental tenet of Christianity. Never miss your morning and evening prayers. Pray in times of trouble and temptation, and also in periods of joy and prosperity that the smiles of fortune and the pleasures of life may not allure you away from the service of God.

We should have a conscientious regard for the Lord's day. It is a bad sign of the times to see how indifferently it is observed. It should be kept holy. Too many work on Sunday or profane it by unbecoming occupations. The growing spirit of commercialism has a tendency to ignore its religious character, but true Christians will not be influenced by this evil tendency.

Those who love God will frequently have His sweet name on their lips and in their hearts, not in vain nor in

contempt, but in reverence and supplication. They will hold all human life sacred. Live and let live should be their motto. The one who acts according to it will not injure the good name nor ruin the fair reputation of another, neither will he blight the prospects nor blast the hopes nor destroy the opportunities of those with whom he comes in contact. You will try to help others along, and not be a hindrance to them by any word or deed.

The Catholic religion insists upon purity and chastity. God loves these virtues and will reward the one who practices them. The extravagance of women and the immorality of men are at the bottom of most of the domestic infelicity and home unrest of the day. Honesty is another virtue the Catholic religion insists upon. Be honorable and upright in all your dealings with others. Take nothing that is not your own. It is anything but pleasant to contemplate the prevalence of dishonesty. However this may be, Catholics know that their religion demands straightforwardness and fairness in all their relations and dealings with their fellowmen. To act otherwise is to throw their religion aside. To steal, to rob, to cheat, to misrepresent, to engage in fraudulent transactions, to form vicious schemes, to repudiate just debts, to refuse fair wages or to be faithless in honest work, are forms of dishonesty which the Catholic Church says its adherents cannot be parties to, and that God will, if the laws of the land will not, punish with severe penalties. God has said "thou shalt not steal," and you cannot mock God.

Catholics cannot speak falsely either in the state-

ment of an untruth or in testifying against others. Evils of this kind assume the form of lying, calumny, slander, insinuation, vituperation, false accusation and perjury. Do not do these things. Towards others, let there be truth, friendship, a kindly word, a sympathetic feeling and a helping hand. Such a Christian spirit will advance your own welfare and promote your own betterment. To be anything else is to be false to the teachings of your faith.

You owe to yourself to faithfully discharge the duties and fulfill the obligations which arise from your state of life. You are required to make an earnest effort to do so. The misfortunes of most people come from not properly discharging these duties and not conscientiously fulfilling these obligations. They refer largely to our daily occupations. Herein lies the secret of success. Your success in life is assured when you are faithful to its sacred responsibilities.

Among these duties and obligations are those which we owe the public good. We must be good citizens. It is incumbent upon us to contribute our share towards the advance of the common interests of the country. To act in such a manner as to be a detriment to the public welfare, to take no interest in selecting those who are to guide its destiny, or to use corrupt means to put dishonest or incompetent officials into positions of power and trust is to betray the commonwealth. A good Catholic means a good citizen, for the welfare of the country is advanced by the morality, intelligence and loyalty of each and every one of the individuals that combine to make the nation.

Good reading is a great help to good living. It elevates the mind, broadens the horizon of thought and makes for virtuous feelings and dispositions. It introduces us into the company of the best and holiest men and women of the world. It makes us lovers of the works of God,—the flower, the tree, the bird, the broad prairie, the rolling ocean, the towering mountain, the vast expanse of the heavens with its “worlds on worlds afar.” These are God’s works, and we can scarcely contemplate them without becoming better. The companionship of good books is infinitely better than the companionship of the saloon, the club or resort of pleasure.

It is certainly human to err, but it is saintly to repent. To live on a morally low plane is to make no effort to rise higher. The Sacraments are wonderful means not only for the forgiveness of sins, but for the acquisition of virtue. No Christian can disbelieve in their efficacy nor neglect their use. They are God’s own means for the healing, strengthening and growth of the soul. Penance and the Holy Eucharist should be received frequently. The Holy Father advises daily Holy Communion as the best way “to restore all things in Christ.” If this can not be done, it is an excellent practice to receive them monthly or at least three or four times a year.

Be brave and courageous in the practice of your religion. It requires effort to be good and to always do the right. Evil is more popular than good. The frowns of the wicked are broader than the smiles of the saints. It was always thus, and we presume it always will be thus. But what do you care for the disapproval of the bad?

Virtue means something to you, for you have a God to love, a Heaven to gain, a Hell to escape and a Purgatory to be made more lightsome. Bend your efforts to please God by keeping His commands, so that you may be rewarded with the enrapturing bliss of His Presence throughout eternity.

(THE END)

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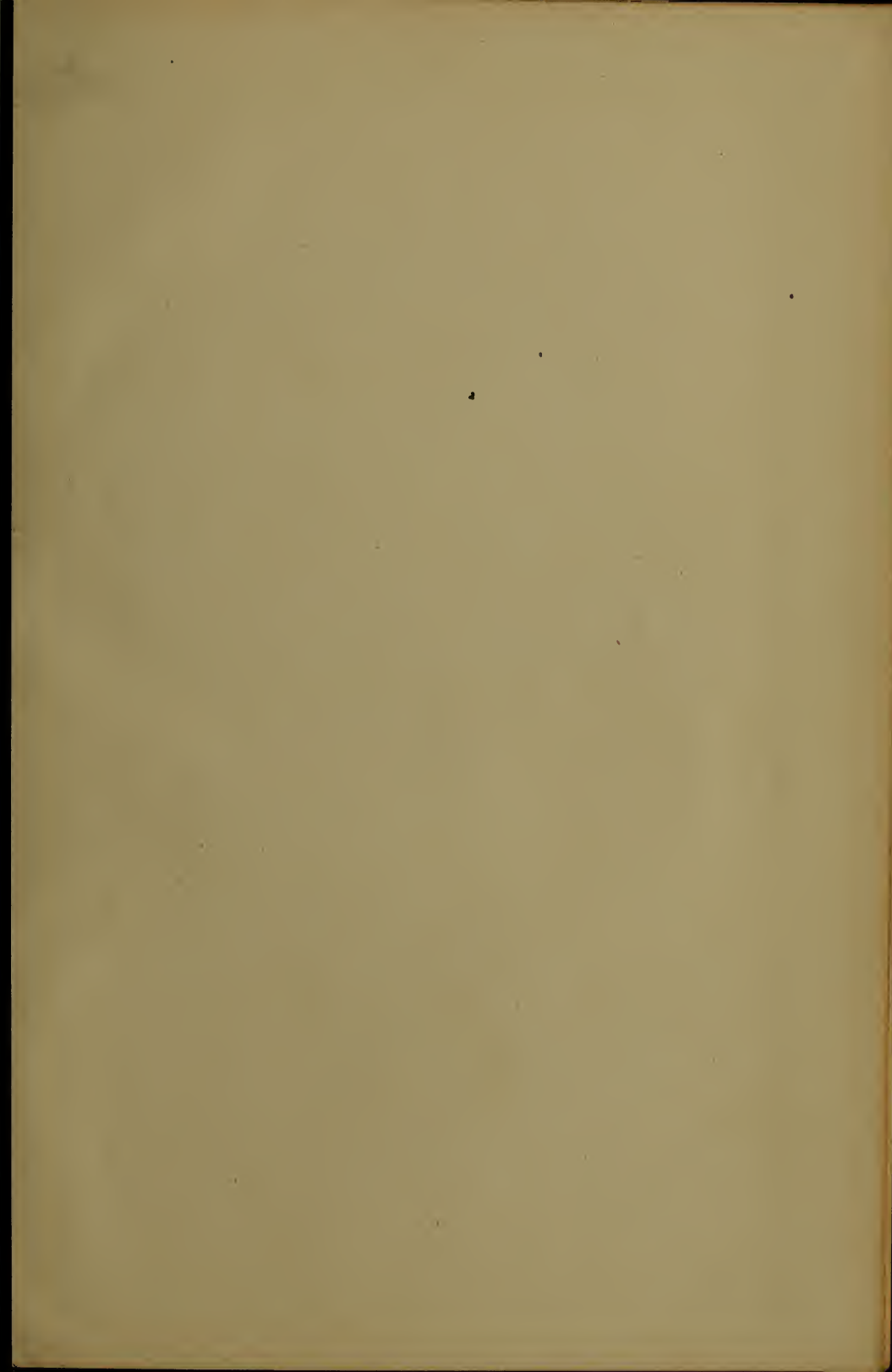
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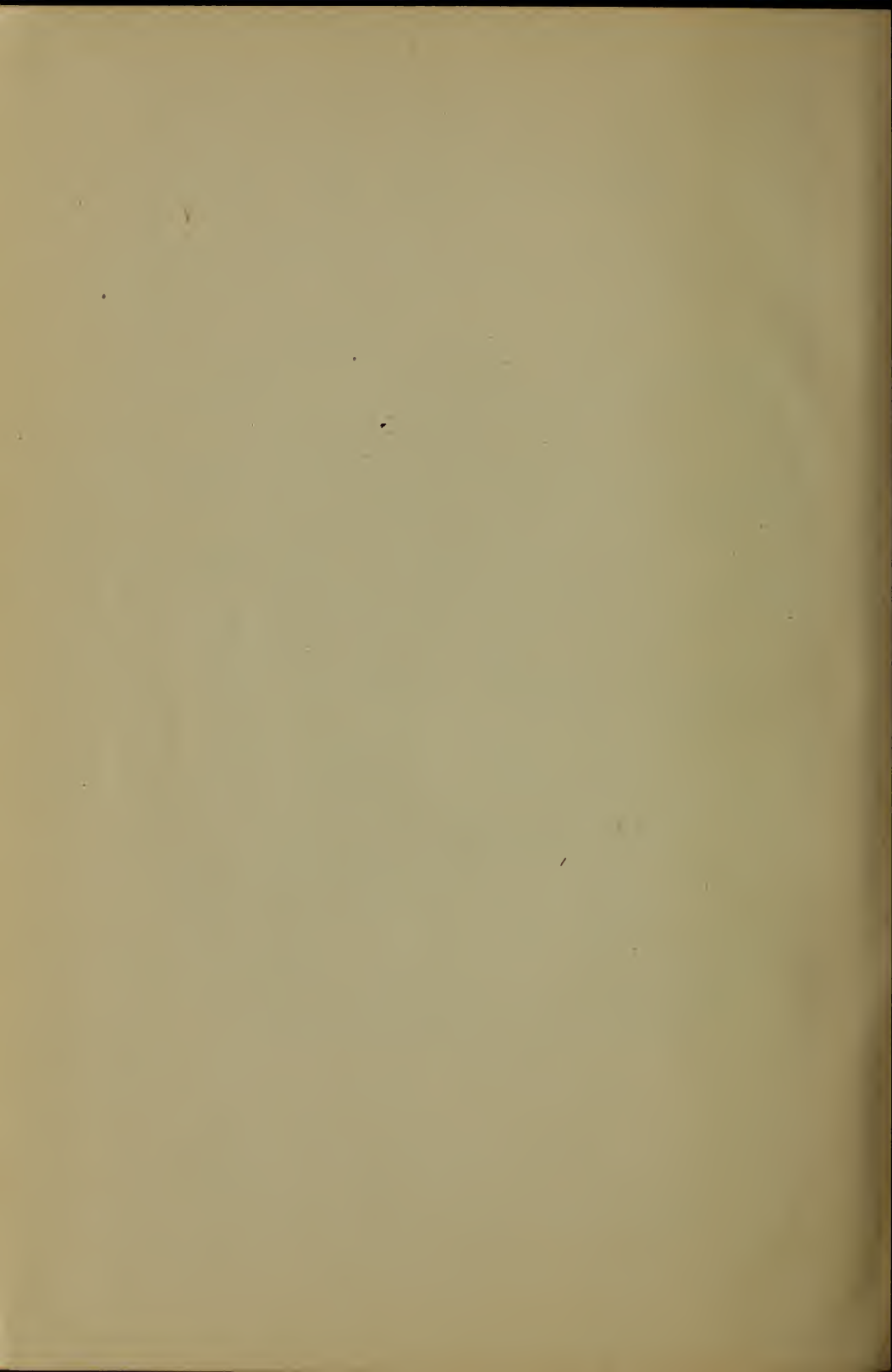


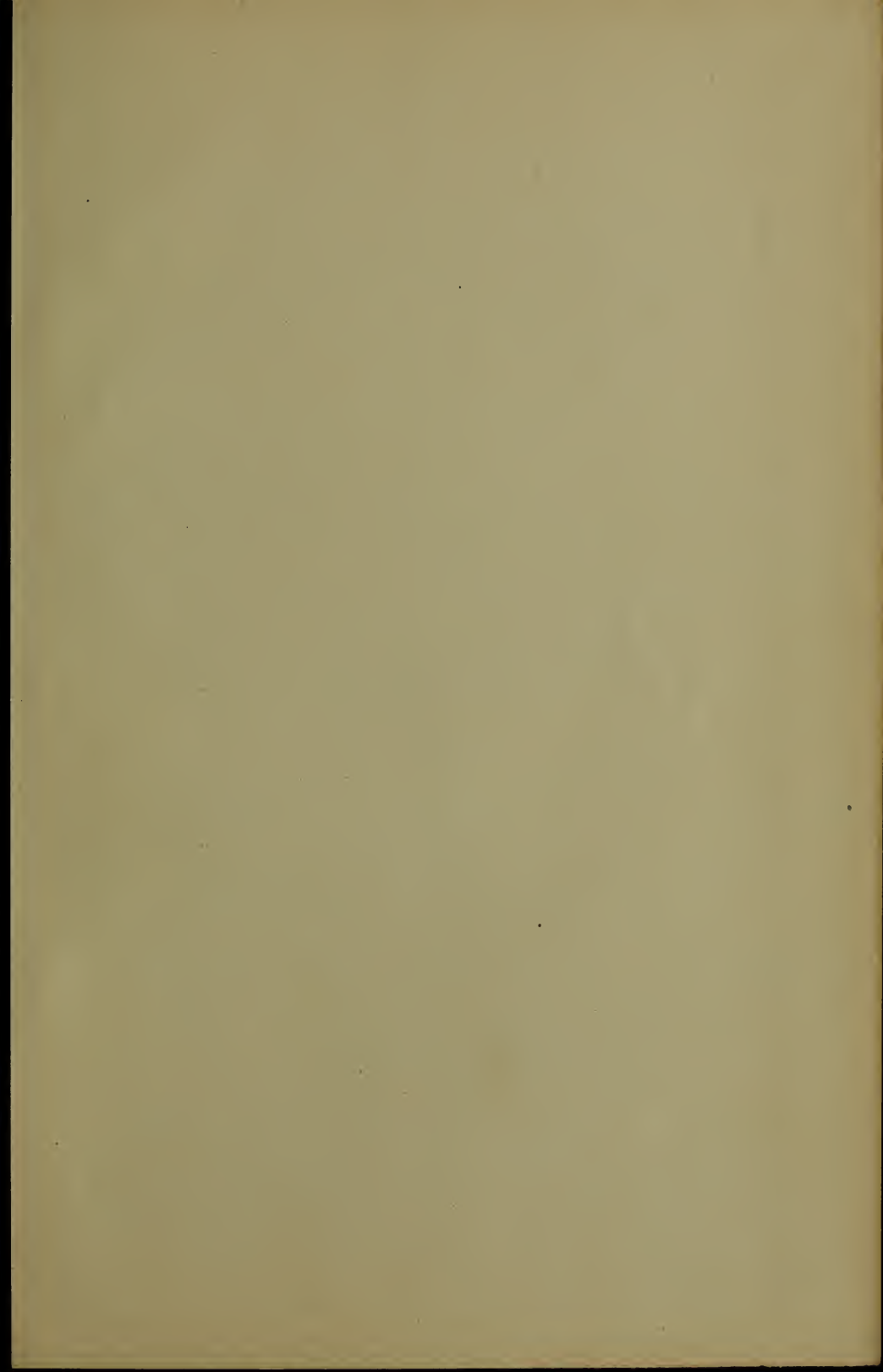
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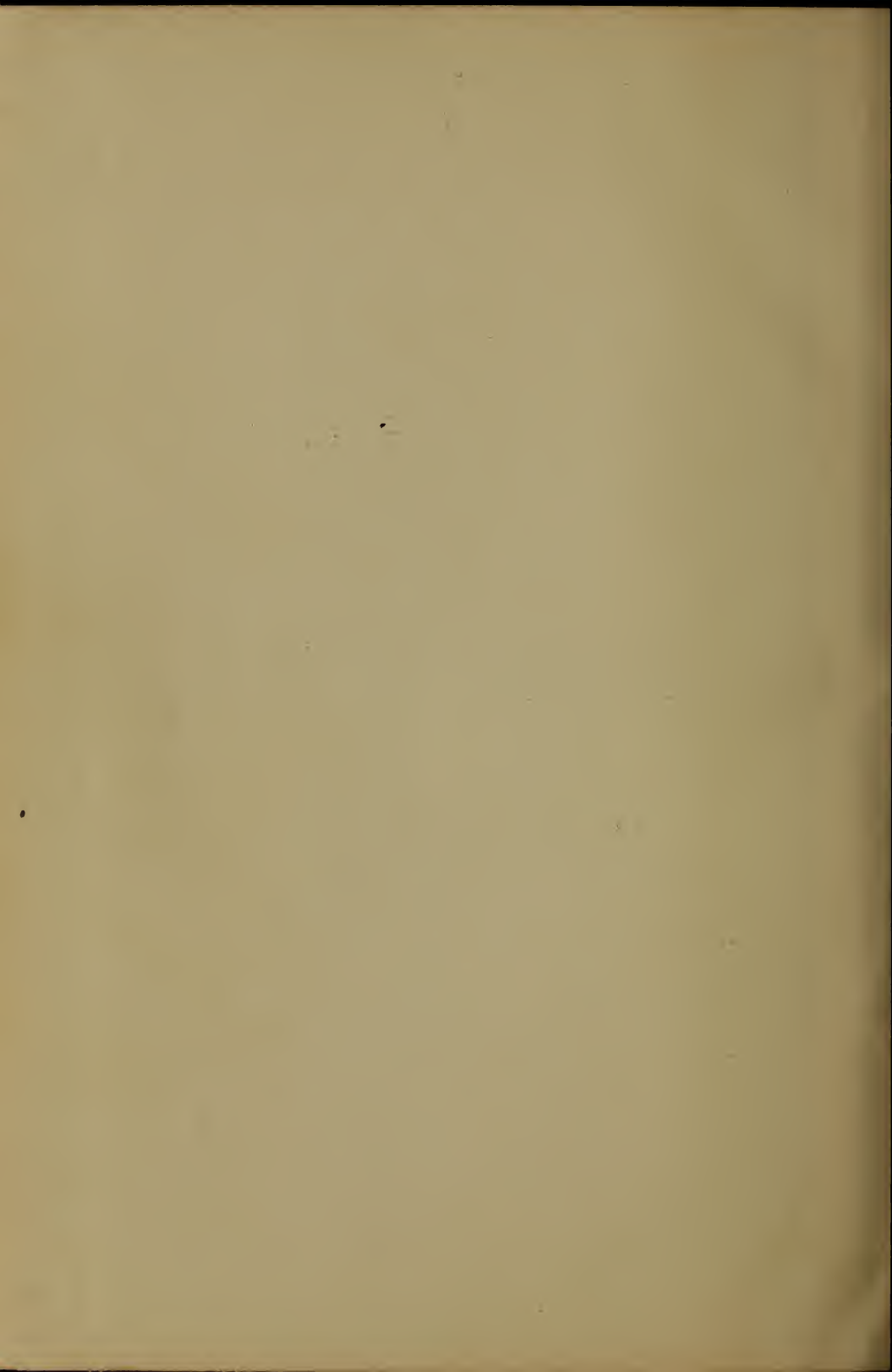
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